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THE TEACHING OF
MODERN LANGUAGES

THE TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES

THE INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION OF
ASSISTANT MASTERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS



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FOREWORD

"THE TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES," issued by the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools, is the second memorandum in the Association's post-war series on the teaching of the main subjects in the secondary school curriculum. "The Teaching of Science" has already been warmly welcomed, and the companion volumes on Classics, English, History, Geography, and Mathematics will appear in due course. In the preparation of these memoranda the Association has the good fortune to be able to draw upon the devotion, knowledge, and experience of many members and friends, to all of whom it would express its most grateful thanks.

The far-reaching reforms in the administration of secondary education foreshadowed in the Education Act of 1944, the development of a wide variety of types of secondary education suited to the abilities and aptitudes of all children in the secondary stage of their education, and the need for further advancement of the "grammar school type" of secondary education combine to make it essential that there should now be a thorough examination of the whole content of what is taught in the schools.

It is the earnest hope of the Executive Committee that this present publication will bring to that study a contribution of no mean value and that its wide circulation will exert an important influence on the theory and practice of the teaching of Modern Languages in secondary schools of all types.

A. W. S. HUTCHINGS

*Secretary, Incorporated Association of
Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools*

PREFACE

IN 1929, the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools (the I.A.A.M.) published an important *Memorandum on the Teaching of Modern Languages*. That work is now out of print.

Very many teachers considered it a valuable contribution to educational progress, and many who are so fortunate as to possess a copy still find it of great use. Some form of re-issue was, therefore, thought desirable.

Yet it was felt by the Education Sub-Committee and by the Executive Committee of the Association that a bare reprint of the original *Memorandum* would miss a great opportunity. Teaching method, school organization and examinations have profoundly developed since 1929. The Education Act of 1944, and other changes which have followed it, greatly influence the work of every teacher and necessitate manifold readjustments. The Second World War, disturbing the staffing and routine of schools, interrupting the supply of well-qualified teachers, men and women, and causing an actual decrease in the number of adequate school buildings, has left a host of new problems which we must attempt to solve under conditions of general shortage, and with the aid of an army of teachers speedily prepared for their work. Further, economic troubles have affected judgment, pains of war past and fears of war to come invade every mind, and, in consequence, ideals have tended to weaken or to stray.

For all these reasons, it was felt necessary drastically to revise the old *Memorandum*; and, in practice, the process of revision speedily developed into the making of an entirely new work. We, the Committee charged with this duty, gratefully acknowledging our debt to our prede-

cessors, and having endeavoured to build well on the foundations which they laid, now have the honour to submit this new treatise on *The Teaching of Modern Languages*.

We do so in modesty. We do not suppose that teaching method has reached finality, that we know all that is known on the subject, or even that we perfectly practise our own theories. On the contrary, we know that all teaching is relative, dependent on the special transient character of society, school, class and teacher, and that, before very many years have passed, we ourselves shall desire this book to be notably amended.

Here and there we have felt conviction that we are right, and that those who disagree are wrong. In such a case, as was our duty, we have boldly stated our belief. But in this book such passages are rare. More often, we have tried to give due weight to varying opinions and, so far as space has allowed, to welcome all that is good and useful. The reader will judge how far in this we have been successful.

We have tried to give due consideration to all Modern Languages studied in the schools, and to all who teach or study them. If sometimes we have used the masculine gender when the common gender would be more accurate, or written 'French' when 'French or German or Spanish or other Modern Language' is meant, we ask the reader's indulgence.

A final word to the inexperienced: Even in a single volume, it is possible to mention far more of useful practice than any teacher could adopt. A man who tried to use all that is satisfactory in every method would bewilder his classes and break his own health. The young teacher must choose for himself the special methods and the particular auxiliary aids which he thinks will best serve his purpose, and must revise his practice as experience may suggest.

We give a list of the Members of our Corresponding

Committee, to whom we offer all our thanks for their painstaking and essential help; and of our Central Committee, who should be blamed for any failure. Many outside our Committee, by correspondence and otherwise, have done all in their power to help us to success, but must not be blamed for our faults. Such are the Executive Committee and the Education Sub-Committee of the I.A.A.M.; we owe a special debt to the encouragement of Mr. F. W. G. Ridgewell, Chairman of the latter Committee. Mr. C. Greenwood and all of the I.A.A.M. Headquarters Staff deserve our very best thanks. Further, we gladly express our gratitude to the following:—

Mr. W. H. Carhart and Mr. T. C. Lawton, who helped us greatly in the earlier stages of our work;

Mr. G. Baron and Mr. B. N. Parker of the University of London Institute of Education, who helped our Committee by a personal visit;

Mr. H. G. A. Hughes of the University of London Institute of Education, who helped in the selection of Spanish works mentioned in the Bibliography;

Mr. H. G. Bolsover, Director of the University of London Institute of Slavonic Studies, who kindly drew up a list of Russian works for the Bibliography;

Dr. L. W. Tancock of University College, London, who very helpfully visited our Committee;

The numerous University Professors, Readers and Lecturers in French, German, Spanish, Italian and Education, who were good enough to reply to the Committee's questionnaires;

Mr. S. R. Mills of Hele's School, Exeter, who kindly lent us his Thesis on *Prognostic Tests of Ability in Modern Languages* (presented to the University of London in December, 1941);

- Miss F. M. Forrest and the French Committee of the Modern Language Association;
- Dr. B. Reynolds and the Italian Committee of the Modern Language Association for help with the Italian Section of the Bibliography;
- Mr. J. E. Travis and the Gramophone and Films Committee of the Modern Language Association;
- Monsieur René Varin, Conseiller Culturel, French Embassy, London;
- Monsieur Jean Huet of the Délégation à Londres de la Cinématographie Française;
- Mr. R. J. Thom, Secretary, National Committee for Visual Aids in Education;
- Professor J. P. Tuck and Mr. M. Gilbert of the Department of Education, King's College, University of Durham;
- Mr. John Maddison of the Films Section, Central Office of Information;
- The Canadian National Film Board;
- The Editor, *The Film User*;
- Mr. W. O. Williams of the Regent Street Polytechnic, London, and Mr. C. D. Jukes of Riley High School, Hull, who gave us specially valuable help with Chapter VII;
- Colonel S. G. Simpson, O.B.E., who kindly provided valuable information utilized in Chapter IX;
- Mrs. Evelyn Murray, whose secretarial assistance saved great delays otherwise unavoidable.

Members of the Central Committee desire to record their grateful appreciation of the invaluable services rendered in the production of this volume by the Honorary Secretary, Mr. E. J. Dennis of the Malet Lambert High School, Hull. The early publication of the work has been rendered possible only by his energy and constant devotion.

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CHAPTER I

WHY TEACH MODERN LANGUAGES?

I. FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

IN this chapter we shall attempt to give some help to the teacher of Modern Languages who wishes to fix his objectives. Such a teacher will probably be at or near the threshold of his career. It may, therefore, be useful to emphasize at the outset certain considerations common to all members of the profession.

It is generally agreed that the teacher of Modern Languages must be enthusiastic and learned in his subject ; but it is equally true that he should have wide interest and understanding outside it. Moreover, heresy as it may seem to some, it is probable that the teacher's personality and general fitness to be a teacher are even more important than his special acquirements.

We make no attempt to define with precision the qualities of personality desirable in a teacher. The briefest list would evoke a picture of unattainable virtue, and it is clearly of little use to tell a man what temperament he ought to have. Conscious of our own imperfections, we prefer to suggest something of what he ought to do.

There are fundamental demands rightly made of every teacher, at least in all well-organized schools. He must restrain all the more objectionable faults of his pupils, and maintain reasonable order in his classroom ; he must help his pupils to develop habits of care in study, thought and expression ; he must take his due part in general school duties ; he must co-operate with his colleagues. Except he do these things, there can hardly be salvation. A teacher, however high his ideals, however great his knowledge of

pedagogic theory, will be worse than useless if his class runs riot; while, if he seeks to evade his share of the general responsibility of the school, he will at the very least meet painful unpopularity in the staff-room.

Further, if the teacher is to be more than a mere crammer, he must, in exercising the restraints necessary to discipline, endeavour not to thwart the legitimate individual growth of his pupils: on the contrary, he must seek to stimulate the growth of all desirable qualities.

Some experienced teachers include the formation of character as one of their duties. They urge that, for good or ill, the teacher will necessarily influence the character of every one of his pupils; that the teacher must, therefore, make every effort to lead his pupils in suitable directions: and they claim, with some justification, that much good of this kind is in fact accomplished during the education of the vast majority of our pupils.

There are, however, other teachers equally experienced who feel that the demand for the formation of character is excessive. These declare that the protean quality of the human spirit makes impossible the exact formulation of any desirable character; that any attempt to classify qualities as desirable and undesirable leads to little of conclusive decision; and that, in any event, the teacher is likely to be but an amateur in psychology, incapable of directly estimating the effect of his own influence.

At present, there exists no means by which this conflict of opinion can be finally resolved. It is none the less possible to offer some guidance which nearly all teachers would approve. The novice should reserve his judgment until he can check by experience his theoretical knowledge. Every teacher should at all times walk humbly. Where he feels bound to condemn, he should do so roundly; where he approves, he should do so explicitly. But he must, so far as possible, rule by persuasion rather than by force; and

when in doubt, he must tolerate, leaving the pupils to work out their own development. If he does these things as well as he can, and reinforces them with the best example of conduct that he can set without hypocrisy, he is probably doing his best for the character of his pupils.

It is particularly important that the teacher in school should not be a propagandist. He must not use his position of trust to further the interests of a particular party, or to glorify one country at the expense of another; he must not even ride a relatively innocent hobby-horse, like total abstinence or anti-vivisection. Textbooks are not always faultless: some French 'Courses,' for example, have been guilty of unintelligent adulation of French politeness, architecture, cooking, etc., and some sociological works intended for Sixth Forms are written from very prejudiced points of view. Such books should be avoided.

In all matters having an element of controversy, it is the teacher's primary duty to give facts fairly selected, on which pupils may base their own opinions. Often the teacher cannot avoid the statement of his own views, but he must not exaggerate their weight. These, of course, are counsels of perfection: the teacher's outlook, in spite of him, will colour his work too much rather than too little. He will come nearest to his ideal if he is at all times a conscious servant of truth.

2. THE VALUE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES

It is now conceded by all educationalists that the study of Modern Languages can confer far-reaching advantages on society in general and on the individual student. The growth of international commerce, essential to modern civilization, demands that many shall speak and write foreign tongues. Scientific and industrial progress make demands even greater and more important, for the fruits of experiment and research must or should be made avail-

able through the world. Travel, and cultural exchanges through the broadcast, written and printed word, have done much, and will do more, to foster the spread of civilization among the nations. Only by full use and rapid extension of all these opportunities will it be possible to check that exaggeration of nationalist feeling which, if it be not checked, will assuredly destroy the world as we know it. On the other hand, if the nations learn to live sensibly together, then, until that remote hypothetical time when one tongue becomes universal, the need for language studies, and the opportunities which they offer, will be increased beyond all present imagination.

To the individual student, at least if he has linguistic ability, the advantages of language study are no less marked. His knowledge, opening the door to a variety of appointments, sometimes enables him to follow the occupation of his choice, and proves of great or essential value in his pursuit of that career. He possesses, if he choose to use them, the keys to vast treasuries of pleasure, culture and inspiration. His understanding of peoples and of affairs is broadened and deepened. His improved grasp of the structure of language will continually find expression, even in his mother tongue; and should he at any time need to learn some language new to him, his progress in comprehension, speech and script will be much speeded by his earlier training. His struggles for accuracy in grammar and idiom will help to form habits of careful thought which will serve him all his life. He may consciously use his language knowledge, or he may not : in either event, his gains are great.

How much the schoolboy, even of high ability, can understand of these aims is open to doubt. Even a Sixth-Form pupil may apprehend them but vaguely; if they are explained to him, he will probably view some of them at least without real conviction. The younger pupil is yet

more limited in his comprehension of what he is doing : often he will have no ideal at all, or none higher than that of success in examinations. If his studies are well directed, this inferior understanding of aim will do him little harm or none, for he is building better than he knows. Estimating his ideals almost at the lowest, it is still good that he should start his working life with that confidence that comes of difficulty successfully faced.

It is this blindness of the young that gives to the Modern Language teacher his greatest difficulty and his greatest stimulus. He must find interest for his pupils, not in ultimate objectives, but in the matter presently laid before them. Here is an incentive, potent in the past and now, for the development of teaching method. We shall see much of its influence in the chapters that follow.

3. NEW TONGUES FOR ALL ?

Unfortunately, there are pupils who, even after a good seven-year course, cannot hope to achieve the ends mentioned in Section 2 of this Chapter. Some cannot secure even a modest share of those benefits. Such pupils are to be found in Grammar and in Technical Schools ; they are far more numerous in the Secondary Modern Schools, where, in addition, their years of study are fewer.

Those who have never seriously studied a foreign language, and those who have gifts which make such study relatively easy, often fail to understand the difficulties of the untalented pupil. A boy who enters a Secondary School at the age of 11 has already spent six or seven years in almost full-time school practice of his own language, with further opportunities of varying value outside the school. During these years, all his interests, including even the basest self-interest, have encouraged him to acquire a fluent command of his native tongue. Yet his knowledge is little more than rudimentary. In the Grammar School,

he may devote to a foreign tongue one-eighth of his time for a similar number of years. It is true that he has the foundation of his own language on which to build, and that his intelligence has developed with the years; but, even so, a seven-year course is none too long for a pupil of fairly good intelligence.

Now there are some subjects of study in which a little knowledge is better than nothing : geography, music and botany are diffidently suggested as examples. There are others where a little knowledge is very dangerous : medicine and surgery. There are yet others in the middle position, where a smattering is futile : such are Modern Languages.

At what point does knowledge of a Modern Language acquire solid worth? Educationists would differ on the question, but it is hard to believe that any would put the limit lower than the standard hitherto required for a bare 'Pass' in the subject at the School Certificate Examination, with corresponding achievement in oral work. Yet in fact many who now study foreign languages in our Grammar Schools never reach this modest standard, even after a four- or five-year course; and, if such a thing as perfect teaching existed, still would be unable to pass.

It is, therefore, to be hoped that teachers, in Modern Schools for example, will not be forced to teach Modern Languages to pupils who cannot learn them, or who cannot hope to stay at school long enough to study them with profit. A two- or three-year course with dull pupils will be useless or worse. Enthusiasts may well pursue research and experiment in the matter which might be taught to less promising pupils, and into the methods by which such material might best be presented. Where such special enthusiasm is lacking, there is every ground for careful selection of those pupils who are to start language study, and for vigorous research into the methods of such selection.

4. AIMS OF THE LANGUAGE TEACHER

Educational theorists, and especially those concerned with Modern Language teaching, often attempt to distinguish cultural from utilitarian aims. This classification, if sometimes convenient, is more arbitrary than sound. There is much of culture in all true utility, and much of utility in all true culture. To some people, a well-made kitchen chair has beauty, and to some, the 'Ode to a Nightingale' has its uses. Euclid scorned the idea that his geometry might be useful: his contempt revealed, not a strength, but a weakness of his culture.

In practice, the question of utility or culture has little importance in all elementary study of a Modern Language. All agree that solid basic grounding must precede the cultural enjoyment of a language, and, in the junior and middle classes, this grounding is virtually all that a teacher can hope to achieve. No doubt, during this period, the pupil's language studies will help to broaden his interests and develop his mind, but such progress will be made in subtle ways which the teacher will rarely be able to define with exactness. At about the stage of the Fifth Year, the pupil can and should begin to look beyond the bare exigencies of elementary grammar, vocabulary and idiom, and, in work for the 'Advanced' papers of the 'General Certificate of Education' (the old H.S.C.) and the University Scholarships, he is required to have some knowledge of the circumstances and culture of the people whose language he is studying. This is as it should be: in examination papers and syllabuses, the best balance of use and culture may not always be struck, but the effort to find that balance is made—with at least a fair degree of success. As for the individual teacher, if he eliminates from his work all that is propagandist, flashy and insincere, he will serve both utility and culture.

The special aims of the Modern Language teacher are

now broadly agreed on all sides. The pupil must learn as well as possible to understand, speak, read and write the language; and, at suitable stages in his progress, he must learn what he can of the history, society and culture of the people who use it. These demands are simple to state, but difficult to fulfil; complete success is impossible even to a teacher of outstanding genius. Yet the effort to achieve the success is well worth while, and is indeed an imperative necessity with all pupils of good intelligence or of linguistic ability.

Broad accord on these aims does not prevent acute difference of opinion as to the emphasis to be laid on various aspects of the work. Such questions are discussed in later chapters of this book. Here, it may be permissible to remark that the school organization and syllabus should always allow, perhaps in all these matters, but certainly in method, a reasonable latitude to the individual teacher.

Practical issues raise further questions of emphasis, or intensify those which have already arisen. Dull classes, unable to reach competence in all aspects of the work, may have to concentrate on some and to neglect others; with such pupils, examinations may force increased attention, say, to written at the expense of oral work. The teacher, in such cases and in many others, must steel his heart to meet some degree of disappointment.

Let him not be downcast. To the inexperienced teacher, his work may seem thankless. But soon his old pupils will be coming to see him. He will be gratified by the respect and thanks which they accord to him; but he will often be astonished at the reasons given for their gratitude, and at their finding in him inspiration of which he had no inkling. All the frustrations and disappointments of the classroom are well compensated by this discovery: that his work continueth great beyond his knowing.

CHAPTER II

WHAT MODERN LANGUAGES SHALL WE TEACH?

I. THE POSITION OF THE QUESTION

WHAT languages shall we teach? Which shall have priority in our schools? Except to deprecate the comparative neglect of German and Spanish, the I.A.A.M. Memorandum of 1929 attempted no answer to these questions. The problems which they indicate had, however, by that date entered the arena of educational controversy. Already in 1913 Dr. Cloudesley Brereton had summed up in favour of French as against German (though he was to adopt a more generous attitude to German, Spanish and Italian in his *Modern Language Teaching* of 1930); while the Government Committee's report known as *Modern Studies* (1918) had drawn attention to the importance of other languages than French, to which, however, it gave the premier position. From that time on, in official publications, in pedagogical manuals, in the educational press, the claims of various languages to fuller representation in the curriculum have been stressed with much skill and force, the most notable examples being: the B. of E. Pamphlet on German in 1929; the B. of E. Report on Foreign Languages in Modern Schools in 1930; the Reports of the Committee on Salesmanship in 1930; the Report of the Committee on Instruction in Modern Languages of the British Association for Commerce and Industry in 1935, and the Spens Report in 1938. Nor did the problems go into abeyance during the Second World War. The Norwood Report (Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools, 1941) devoted space to the discussion of the relative importance of the chief European

languages, and, while defending the position of French, pleaded for greater facilities for the teaching of other tongues. The present stage in the controversy is marked by the direct attack on the predominating position of French by Professor E. A. Peers of Liverpool University, whose onslaught in the *Fortnightly Review* of September 1942 on what he calls the monopoly of French was resisted by Professor D. W. Brogan in the November 1942 issue of the same journal and in his *French Personalities and Problems* of 1946. Two other contributions to the controversy by Professor Peers demand mention: his *Spanish Now* with its strong anti-French bias, and his *New Tongues* 1946, in which, in spite of his predilection for Spanish, we find the fullest exposition of the essential claims of the five chief Modern Languages: French, German, Spanish Italian, Russian.

There is no doubt that this educational problem is one of great actual importance. The changed conditions of Europe resulting from the War, the emergence of Russia, the uncertain future of Italy and Spain, the temporary fall and the revival of France, the partition and occupation of Germany, the political reshaping of some of the smaller countries of Europe and of the East, the emphatic influence of the North and South American blocs—all these questions have a direct bearing on contemporary educational ideas and not least on the cultural, commercial and international aspects of language learning and teaching. Modern studies conceived in the widest sense and aimed at understanding modern tendencies, ideas and institutions of other countries must play a larger part than ever before in our educational system and postulate a careful investigation of the languages on which these studies must be based.

2. THE POSITION IN THE SCHOOLS TODAY

Before entering into a discussion of the criteria affecting

our choice of languages and their order of importance, we must sketch briefly the situation now existing in the schools. The outstanding feature is, of course, the dominating position of French. Enquiries show (a) that there are probably no Grammar Schools in which French is not taught at some stage; (b) that in the vast majority of such schools French is the first foreign language taught; (c) that German is the chief rival to Latin for the place of second foreign language; (d) that Spanish is rarely the first foreign language and is much less taught even than German at any stage; and (e) that Italian and Russian receive very little attention at all. The figures showing the numbers of candidates entered at School Certificate Examinations in the various languages have but confirmed what is well known. Over 90 per cent. of the candidates usually offer French. In 1939 there were seven times as many candidates taking French as German, and about fifty-eight times as many taking French as Spanish (the numbers for Italian and Russian were negligible). Even these low figures for German and Spanish represented an increase on those for 1928, the German candidates having increased by approximately 100 per cent. and the Spanish candidates by about 23 per cent.; but the war years, 1939 to 1945, witnessed a distinct deterioration in the position of both German and Spanish. The relative positions of these languages may be realized from the following comparative figures of French, German and Spanish entries at the School Certificate Examination of London University. Representing those taking French by 100, and those taking other languages proportionately, we get :

		French		German		Spanish
1939	...	100	...	17.4	...	1.8
1941	..	100	...	17.7	...	1.6
1945	...	100	..	14.8	.	1.6
1947	...	100	...	14.3	...	2.3
1948	...	100	...	16.6	...	2.7

These figures have greater significance when it is realized that the entries in German and Spanish at the London University School Certificate Examination generally form a higher percentage of the total entries than in the examinations of other University School Examination Boards.

It is not surprising that the advocates of German and especially of Spanish are very dissatisfied with the disproportion and draw attention, not only to the dangers resulting from neglect of these languages, but to the strange persistence with which schools and education authorities have ignored the recommendations and even the warnings contained in some of the official reports to which we have already referred.

3. ATTITUDE OF THE TEACHERS

The current attitude to the question of many grammar school teachers is apparent from replies received to our questionnaire which asked *inter alia*: If you had free choice in selecting the languages to be taught at your school, in what order of importance would you arrange them? There was an overwhelming vote for French as the first foreign language to be taught; the most popular second choice and the most popular third choice were in each case German, which had a good majority over Spanish, the best fourth choice. It was noticeable too, that, while Spanish was little more popular than Latin as a first choice, Latin had a better following as a second or third choice. The fifth and sixth choices were Russian and Italian. It would be rash to base any final conclusions on this small 'straw' vote, but it would be equally rash to assert that the preference for French was invariably the result of prejudice or tradition, for that preference was often shown in schools where a variety of languages is available, and sometimes by teachers whose main language is not French.

4. THE PREPONDERANCE OF FRENCH

The Norwood Report suggests that the dominant position of French is due partly to the routine of French studies set up through the lengthening tradition of teachers and pupils of this subject, but points out that the historical relations of France and England and the close connections of French and English cultures have also been determining factors. To these we must add the proximity of the two countries and above all the hegemony of French in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This latter fact partially explains the continuance of the prestige of French as a world language in the nineteenth century and even today, for, as the language generally learnt by cultured people throughout Europe, it had become the vehicle of intercourse and of diplomacy. Professor Brogan suggests that the position of French in the English Secondary Schools is due to its having replaced Greek in the curriculum. It would be more true to say that in these schools it is most often Latin that it has replaced, at least as a first language. The continued predominance of French is due in part to its having been the spearhead in the fight for including Modern Languages in the curriculum, and the particular qualities and claims of this language that made the fight successful are still thought valid by a large number of responsible educationalists. It is obvious that French having once opened the road, a case could be made out for the inclusion in the curriculum of almost any language. Practical considerations must limit the choice, just as by no means every art or every science can find a place in our time-tables. Inclusion must be the result of a careful comparison of the claims advanced for each language.

5. CRITERIA OF CHOICE

What then shall be our criteria? A large number have

been suggested, for the question is not merely an academic one. Racial connection, proximity, the frequency and necessity of contacts, the size, power and influence of the country concerned, the diffusion of its language and activities in its dependencies and other countries, its commerce, its industry, the culture to which the language gives access—all of these have been put forward in addition to the purely educational considerations to which the discussion can no longer be confined. The various factors differ greatly in importance, and some may be excluded altogether. For example, if racial connection were an important consideration, we should straightway have to bar Russian, to the speakers of which language we are not closely related; similarly, if proximity mattered greatly—though we know that rapid air travel is daily abolishing distances—our limits of choice would be narrow. As teachers, we may be tempted to put purely educational and cultural considerations before commercial and international ones, or even to exclude these last two; whilst, as good Europeans or as good world citizens, we might regard the international aspect as dominant. The numerous factors may be concentrated in four main groups: 1, *Educational*; 2, *Cultural*; 3, *Commercial*; 4, *International*. These terms are neither mutually exclusive nor easy to define narrowly. Where, for example, do we draw the line between education and culture? Are not commercial and political motives closely interlocked? Does the study of a language for commercial or political ends exclude cultural considerations? Above all, what do we mean by the term *Educational* when applied to language study?—do we mean providing mental discipline, training in linguistics, laying the basis for learning other languages, or simply aiming at some immediate or practical end? In spite, however, of these unsatisfactory features, this classification of the various factors provides a useful framework for the

discussion and comparison of the different languages.

6. EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a discipline, most languages can offer valuable scope for the exercise of the powers of observation, comparison, analogy, accuracy and concentration, as well as for auditory, oral, visual and mental training. The main point raised under the Educational heading, however, is that of the comparative difficulty of different languages. Psychologically, say some, we should begin with an easy language and work upward towards the more difficult; we should not place any obstacles in the path of rapid progress and mastery. The reply to this usually takes the form of insisting that the disciplinary value of linguistic training implies an element of difficulty. This latter argument pushed to its extreme would entitle us to begin with Chinese or Russian, or at least a highly inflected language like Latin. On the other hand, the exponents of the easy way could, and often do, make out a strong case for beginning with an artificial language. Difficulty in language study may arise through dissimilarity of pronunciation, vocabulary, complexity of grammar, refinement of expression and idiom. Spanish, say the advocates of the easy way, presents the minimum of difficulty under these heads. The language is almost phonetic, and few of the sounds are really difficult in themselves; this, of course, is equally true of German. Russian is phonetic, but the multiplicity of characters and the difficulty of various individual sounds offer immediate obstacles to progress. Italian likewise is phonetic, and only a few consonantal groups give any trouble. French is certainly unphonetic and some sounds, such as the nasal group, are hard to master perfectly. Many teachers, however, contend that moderate difficulty of pronunciation is no bar to progress in the case of young people whose speech organs are still very

flexible. Intonation varies in difficulty with the different European languages, but if taught carefully from the start, is in no case an insuperable problem.

The vocabulary difficulty is approximately equal in all the languages in question, with the exception of Russian. The advocates of German point out the similarity to English of a large number of the German words learned in the early stages. French, however, is not at a great disadvantage in this respect, and, in the more advanced stages, French, Spanish and Italian offer a large number of words, especially abstract terms, closely allied through Romance origins, to their English equivalents, whereas German compounds often present a real stumbling-block to English pupils.

Spanish accidence and syntax are, on the whole, easier than French, though not as much easier as some Spanish teachers maintain. The Spanish verb is certainly as difficult for English people as the French, while its subjunctive mood, perhaps, is more so; but there is no doubt that progress in using the language comes more rapidly than in the case of French, especially when it is being learned, as it so often is, as a second language, after a year or more of other linguistic experience. French accidence is moderately easy, in spite of the large number of irregular verbs, many of the commoner forms of which, however, are mastered under modern oral methods in quite early stages, or met in reading. The real difficulty of French consists not so much in the learning of the grammar—indeed, up to the School Certificate stage, the essentials of syntax can be reduced to a few simple rules—but in its fine accuracy of expression, and in its delicate shades of meaning. Even at the School Certificate stage, however, the majority of grammar-school pupils are able to appreciate something of this, whilst, for advanced pupils, this characteristic of French makes it an incomparable instrument of education. German is more

highly inflected than the three Romance languages, and this makes it much more difficult in the early stages for those pupils who have never had to handle inflexion, in Latin for example. Case endings, gender and concord need continual practice. Here we have a disciplinary training through difficulty, but this value, if it be one, tends to diminish in the higher stages. Nor does German prose provide the training in precision and refinement that is claimed for French and that is a less striking feature of Spanish. The difficulties of Russian grammar are formidable : it will very rarely be possible to introduce it successfully in any but the very best forms of Secondary schools, and in Sixth Forms where there may be some pupils with a special incentive to learn it. A further consideration that may influence our choice is the fact that the knowledge of a Romance language facilitates the learning of another language in the same group. The pupil who has learnt French, for example, makes rapid progress in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. The utility of Russian and German in this respect is more limited as far as our schools are concerned.

7. CULTURE

If, under the heading of culture, we include literature, art, architecture and music, it is evident that the last three need not detain us greatly in a linguistic investigation, for a knowledge of them is to a great degree accessible to all who are interested, whether they are good linguists or not. They are, of course, important in a full study of a foreign culture, but they do not require a thorough knowledge of the language concerned, for a very adequate comprehension of them may be attained through the vehicle of English or any other important language that has been learned. It is, for example, possible to study French Gothic architecture, German and Russian music, Italian and Spanish painting through first-rate English authorities, though the

linguist has the advantage of access to a greater range of information. Our main concern here must be the value of a language as determined by the quality of the literature to which it provides the entry.

Although all the major languages can advance great claims to our attention as students of literature, few would dispute the pre-eminence of French and Italian in this field of culture, and, if we may differentiate further, we would put French first. As Professor Brogan points out, French culture is predominantly literary, and, in this case more than in any other, the study of its language is the key to the essential culture of France. French and Italian literature have profoundly influenced English literature, but England has to such a degree repaid its debt to France that there are probably no two modern literatures more closely linked and mutually indebted. This fact would constitute a claim for the study of French transcending almost any others, even if French literature did not possess a wholly valid claim in its intrinsic merits. To rehearse these is needless, though it is worth remarking, with the author of *Redbrick University*, that, in addition to its great creative writers, France possesses a large number of first-rate authors who take us outside the field of pure literature into history, education, science, law, criticism, philosophy and theology; while Professor Peers acknowledges that, in addition, France is rich in writers high in the second class and in the minor genres, and that her creative literature today is vigorous and flourishing. Other writers praise the universality of French literature, the deep psychological insight, essential humanity and intellectual honesty that characterize it; while educationists contend that the logical, aesthetic and literary training that its study involves provides an instrument of mental discipline comparable with that of the classics. Further, Paris has been for centuries, and still is, a world clearing-house for every great develop-

ment in culture, art and ideas, because French seems a medium remarkably adapted for the expression of such matters.

To place French literature first is not to disparage the immense contributions to the world of the spirit of the greatest Spanish and German writers. Few would agree with Sir Richard Livingstone who considers, surprisingly, that German literature 'has so little above the second rate,' or see in the fact that Spain has suffered from periods of literary eclipse an important criticism of its outstanding value. Both of these great literatures are worthy of the most profound study, and can provide thoroughly satisfying fields of exploration for our advanced pupils and university students. The comparative ease of the early stages of Spanish study must not deceive us as to its value as a full discipline in the higher stages nor as to its potentialities as a life-time study; while the fact that Germany has twice in this century been the cause of a world conflagration should not antagonize us to the immense cultural value of its eighteenth and nineteenth century writers, or to the outstanding contributions which its scholars have made to methods of study and research. Professor Peers emphasizes the importance of a knowledge of French and German to the specialist in any branch of learning and to the professional man, owing to the contributions made in the past and still being made by French and German scholars. The Norwood Report supports this view, whilst Professor Brogan insists that, in this cultural field, the chief rival to French is German and not Spanish.

Where Italian is studied in this country it is usually for the purpose of culture and travel. The almost complete neglect into which this subject has fallen in our schools is rather a reflection on our crowded time-tables than on our lack of appreciation of what Italian literature and art have meant to all civilized peoples. Our pupils' knowledge of

Italian culture comes to them indirectly through the study of European history, through the study of other literatures and through visits to Art Galleries, but our best pupils are rarely devoid of some tincture of it. An excellent case may be made out for the teaching of the subject in Sixth Forms, and even in Commerce Courses, where a knowledge of Italian may be of great value to the economist.

Russian literature is mainly represented in the reading of the average cultured Englishman by a few great novels and plays, available in good translations. As long as the subject is completely neglected in our schools, the knowledge of Russian literature, even in translation, will be limited to the few. If, for political and commercial reasons, the interest in Russia and the study of its language become more general here, the rich field of its literature will be cultivated in the manner it deserves.

Limitations of space prevent comment on the cultural aspects of other languages, such as Portuguese, which find practically no scope in our schools and little in our universities.

Nor have we discussed in connection with Spanish the rich possibilities of South America, where, amidst the vast population of its eighteen constituent states, it is inevitable that a great and distinctive literature must arise, though until recently the most fruitful influence here seems to have been French rather than Spanish.

8. COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many educationists do not regard it as the province of school teachers to teach languages for commercial and utilitarian purposes, and prefer to relegate this kind of instruction to the business houses. The Norwood Report took a somewhat similar view. The danger in over-emphasizing the commercial value of languages is that, not only does the choice of a language to be studied tend to be influ-

enced by its possibility of providing jobs, but there is the risk of a severe reaction if eventually the jobs are not forthcoming. The stimulus given to the learning of Spanish about 1930 by various official and semi-official pronouncements was lost through such a reaction even before the setback of 1938-39, for the jobs promised were non-existent, whilst the cultural value of the subject had been overlooked in the eagerness to master the conventions and abbreviations of Spanish correspondence.

It is sometimes forgotten that, for the best purposes of commercial intercourse, it is necessary for the English representative abroad of an English firm to be a man of wide culture and good social personality, thoroughly versed in the history, institutions, ideas and psychology of the country to which he is accredited. His ability as a negotiator or as an organizer takes precedence of his linguistic ability, for, without the former, no amount of the latter gift can make him a valuable agent; it is true, however, that eventually he must make himself a master of the language. Gifted with the right personality and intellectual qualities, the candidate for the higher commercial posts is usually quite capable of extending his existing knowledge of a foreign language or of learning adequately a new language. The existence of such posts—and they are few in number, and the prerogative mainly of the university graduate—does not, therefore, greatly affect our choice of languages in the schools. As regards minor commercial posts, at home or abroad, the British Association of Commerce and Industry has warned us that the proportion of the total number of people engaged in commerce who may be called on to make considerable use of foreign languages in their work is distinctly small, for, not only is an important portion of our foreign trade carried on with English-speaking countries, but even large firms need only a few foreign correspondents some of whom are foreigners, or carry on their overseas

trade through foreign agents resident here or abroad. Only the largest firms send out representatives to investigate conditions on the spot, to find new markets or to organize existing undertakings. The path to advancement through foreign languages is difficult, says the same Report, which further recommends schools not to teach languages from any special commercial standpoint.

Having entered this caveat, we must not entirely rule out commercial considerations in deciding which languages we shall teach. On the contrary, we must see to it that as many of the languages that are essential to commerce are taught, as will enable this country to compete adequately in the great fields of potential customers for our goods that the world provides, and in which we must reconquer our reputation for sound workmanship and honourable dealing. We must have a 'pool' of linguists available if the need for them should arise.

To decide with any accuracy the proportion of experts in the different languages that our commerce will require is impracticable, for the trends of world trade in the present abnormal conditions are an unsafe indication. If pre-war statistics are any guide, our trade figures for 1938 show that if we exclude English-speaking countries (the U.S.A. and the British Empire, which between them account for half our trade), Spain and the Spanish-American countries come roughly on a par with the combined Scandinavian countries, and that our trade with either of these groups exceeds our trade with French-speaking countries (including the French and Belgian colonies and Belgium itself). Next come the German-speaking countries, then Holland, the U.S.S.R. and Italy—in that order. These facts might indicate that far more pupils should learn Spanish and Scandinavian tongues than French and German, but there is little agreement on this. The British Association for Commerce and Industry affirmed in its

report on this subject of 1935, when trade conditions differed very little from those of 1938, that, according to the evidence given at their enquiry, 'the most important language for commercial purposes is French; the next important are German and Spanish.' Other languages described as being of commercial value are Italian, Portuguese, Slavonic languages, Oriental languages and Swedish. The Report goes on to recommend that more attention should be given to German and Spanish, and not merely for the purposes of trade; but this choice by commercial experts of French as the most important language of commerce is taken for granted in the Report and is probably explained by the facts that French is used as a means of commercial intercourse by many countries speaking less-known languages, that France has a vast colonial empire second only to ours, and that Paris is one of the most important financial centres of the world. Probably we should not now be willing to put German so high in the list, as it may be a considerable time before her social and economic recovery will make her commercially important, and we might be inclined to put Spanish before French in view of the tremendous possibilities of Latin-American trade (for which, incidentally, we must compete with that formidable rival the U.S.A.), though we must not forget too the great scope for mutual aid that lies before England and France in their struggle for complete recovery. Portuguese, also, as the language of 60 million people in Brazil, a country of vast resources, must not be neglected. Nor are our business men likely to overlook the U.S.S.R. with nearly 200 million potential customers and its great schemes of development. In all commercial fields, rivalry between the great trading countries will be keen, and we must decide in what ways facilities for learning the most needed foreign languages can be extended, and what part the secondary schools can play in the process.

9. INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Whilst we would agree that politics are best kept out of the classroom, languages (unlike pure mathematics and pure science) cannot be taught in a kind of academic vacuum. Not only is the matter of our language lessons very often concerned with the life and customs of the foreign nations, but our country is so deeply involved in a large number of international problems that we cannot escape the duty of studying with our pupils within certain limits our relations with contemporary societies. Many will agree with Professor Chadwick that 'the mistakes made by British policy in the past have been due in the main to ignorance of foreign peoples'. Undoubtedly we must not disregard Sir Richard Livingstone's warning against overcrowding our curriculum or teaching to children what few of them have the maturity of mind to grasp fully; but the necessity of 'living intelligently in a complicated world' compels us to examine, with our senior pupils at least, something of the conditions prevailing in other countries, of the factors social, economic and historical that gave rise to those conditions, to their institutions, to their present outlook and to their most striking national characteristics. To do this with strict impartiality will need the greatest tact and skill on the part of the history, geography and language teachers. The rôle of the latter will be, through the study of literature and of the current press, through direct communication and interchanges between pupils, and through the organization and encouragement of travel, to facilitate in every way contacts personal and intellectual between our best minds and those of the countries studied. Our choice of the languages to be taught and the priority we may give to the various languages become vital factors in world understanding.

Very few now think, as some did in 1940, that the rôle of France in Europe is no longer important and that the

interests of Britain are no longer linked with those of France. The rapid strides which she is making towards moral and material recovery, the seriousness and energy she is displaying in dealing with her many domestic problems, are a promise that France may yet enjoy a future no less brilliant than her past, and give the lie to the pessimistic forebodings of 1940. Her literature and her arts suffered but a slight eclipse during the war and are once more flourishing. Her essential characteristics, fearless intellectual honesty, the power of incisive self-criticism and self-analysis, her passion for liberty are as vigorous as ever and as valuable to the world today as they have been in the past.

Friends of Italy and Spain are depressed at the moment by the spectacle of defeat or frustration that these countries present. It will be a considerable time before either will be ready to play a notable part in European or world affairs. Germany, too, subjugated, divided and morally bankrupt, is destined to go through many painful processes before her ancient vigour and industry reassert themselves. Nevertheless, we cannot afford to neglect the studies through which alone we can appreciate what is best in the character and spirit of these three important nations and seek to bring them back to a full and fruitful partnership in the comity of democratic peoples.

Soviet Russia, with its extraordinary power of recovery and dynamic vitality, with its vast population, its powerful influence spreading through Europe into farthest Asia, stands out among the leading nations of the world. Its language, if the number of people speaking it as a native tongue is any criterion, ranks with English and Spanish as a 'world-language,' and, though its essential difficulty makes it unlikely that it will be taught as a full school subject, we should be well advised to augment the small facilities that exist for the study of this language, as well as of

the literature, history and social organization of the country with which we have made a twenty-year alliance.

Another land of rapidly widening interest to us is Latin-America. Here, as in the case of Russia, there are many unexplored potentials of a material, social and spiritual order. The teeming populations speaking Spanish or Portuguese are destined to great developments in their manner of life and government, and impose on us the necessity of intensifying considerably the attention we have hitherto given to their languages and civilizations. Apart from commercial considerations, Russia and Latin-America provide us with a fascinating opportunity of studying the emergence of what are virtually new peoples in the making. We cannot predict what their future will be, when illiteracy in both these vast communities has vanished, and what influence they will exert in international affairs, but we ought to be in a position to understand developments and to multiply our contacts.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

These may be stated briefly as follows :—

1. That many of the reasons leading to the general adoption of French as the first foreign language to be taught are still valid, above all for A and B pupils in Grammar Schools.
2. That opportunities for learning Spanish and German should be greatly increased, and that in some schools they might provide the first foreign language.
3. That Spanish should generally be the first foreign language for 'C' pupils, e.g. for many in Secondary Modern Schools.
4. That in Grammar Schools and in certain Technical Schools, where French is the first foreign language to be taught, it should be made possible for a second language to be taken up in the second or third years,

and that this be preferably German or Spanish.

5. That, reciprocally, where German or Spanish are the first languages, it should be possible for any pupil to take up French at some stage.
6. That intensive Sixth-Form courses in French, German and Spanish should, where possible, be made available for Arts, Science and Commerce students if they have been prevented from studying any of these in the general school course.
7. That in exceptional cases Russian might be introduced in 'A' forms below the Sixth; otherwise this language should not be taught below the Sixth Form.
8. That Italian and Portuguese might find a place in Sixth Forms both in Arts and in Commerce courses, for pupils who have already specialized in French or Spanish.
9. That in large towns a differentiation of curricula be made between secondary schools so as to permit a wider choice of languages, either as first languages or in later stages.
10. That, where local circumstances and commercial considerations render it advisable, different parts of the county or different towns should specialize or provide extra facilities in certain languages, e.g. Swansea, Cardiff and Liverpool in Spanish, Hull and N.E. areas in Russian or Scandinavian languages.

CHAPTER III

THE TEACHER : HIS SELECTION AND TRAINING

I. GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

A UNIVERSITY DEGREE is rightly held to be a very desirable qualification for the teacher of Modern Languages. Sometimes, however, the necessary knowledge and cultural background are found in one who has lacked the good fortune to be a member of a university, but who is nevertheless a skilled linguist and a sound scholar.

Graduate or not, the Modern Language teacher must be more than linguist and scholar. Like all other teachers, he must have a sympathetic understanding of boys and girls and a genuine interest in the varied activities of the school community. Unless he feels that he will be able to enjoy his life as a teacher, he will do well to choose some other profession.

But not even a combination of enthusiasm, academic knowledge and cultural background is enough. The teacher of Modern Languages—again like other teachers—must acquire a degree of classroom skill. To some this comes, or seems to come, quite naturally. Yet even the born teacher has much to learn by trial and error, by patient experiment and observation, by self-criticism and a readiness to accept the criticism of others. Humility and tolerance, especially in the earliest stages of his career, are essential.

2. SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS

In addition to his general qualifications, the Modern Language specialist must have a mastery of his own subject. In particular he should have :—

1. A very good pronunciation and intonation, for his pupils will not speak better than they are taught.
2. A fluent, idiomatic and reasonably accurate command of the spoken and written language, for he must be able, at all stages of the school course, to use his language as a medium of language instruction. It is also desirable that he should be able to use his language, so far as he thinks it advisable, to deal with some of the elementary aspects of the literature, civilization and institutions of the country concerned.
3. A knowledge of phonetics, not necessarily in order to teach phonetics, but to enable him to teach a good pronunciation, to diagnose faults, and to take the most effective measures to correct them (incidentally, no one should be allowed to take up Modern Language teaching unless his hearing is perfect).
4. A sound knowledge of the structure of the contemporary language, its syntax and accidence, together with a grasp of comparative and historical grammar sufficient for the presentation of his language in relation to other languages, and as a living thing, in continuous evolution.
5. An acquaintance with the civilization of the country, together with a close first-hand knowledge of the contemporary people, so that he may stimulate interest and make his subject live in the imagination of his pupils.
6. A knowledge of literature, as well as of the technique of criticism, so that he may help his pupils to appreciate at least a little of the literature of the country with which he deals.
7. A talent for dramatization, and a temperament not averse to a little exhibitionism in the cause of language instruction.

3. MODERN LANGUAGES AT SCHOOL

The teacher's preparation begins at school. There the future teacher may reasonably be expected to acquire a really good pronunciation, some fluency of expression in the basic spoken and written language, and reasonable accuracy within the limits of the ground covered. He may also be expected to learn to read simple texts easily and rapidly, and to handle reference material and other sources of information.

It may well be that a truly high linguistic standard can only be obtained at school at the expense of training in literature. This view has been stated by some professors of Modern Languages in our Universities, in their very valuable replies to our Questionnaires. One, representative of a number, thinks that in recent years oral fluency has improved, but at the expense of accuracy in the written language and in knowledge of grammar, both formal and functional. Another, also representative of a number, holds the opinion that in the schools far more time should be devoted to writing and speaking the language, and less to literature; even at the Sixth Form stage, he thinks, the literary values with which the pupil is asked to deal are usually far beyond his comprehension, and he thus gives, not the fruits of his own appreciation, but mere repetition of the views of his elders.

Another university teacher holds that, in his language, set books for Sixth Form External Examinations should be abolished, and that the teacher should devote the time gained to the more thorough teaching of the language itself, using, of course, as many texts of his own choosing as he likes. After stating that the schools of his district have declared against the abolition of set books, he says : 'Not much wonder we groan in the universities at the elementary work we have to do, when the schools prefer to cram instead of doing their real job, which should include quite

a high standard in the "chatter" use of the language.'

Yet another typical reply by one who wants more language and less literature in the schools is: 'We must be able to take for granted the bare elements of grammar. In fact, we cannot, because too often they are not there.'

The universities' claim to receive from the schools students who, whether or not they have had considerable literary training, are at least well grounded in the language itself, seems reasonable and sound. Yet important facts must be considered before we can recommend any sweeping reform either of school syllabuses or of University Scholarship Examinations. It is very probable that the weaknesses of which the universities complain are largely caused either by the natural frailties of minds partially mature or by the effects of the War on our educational system and on the minds of our pupils. The first of these causes is explicitly or implicitly considered throughout this book; the second, almost certainly diminishing in effect, can be fully removed only by the peaceful settlement of world problems.

We must further remember that very many of our Sixth Form pupils neither hope nor wish to proceed to the university; an appreciable number do not continue their formal education after leaving school. Of those who enter the university, not all continue their Modern Language studies, at least beyond the subsidiary stage. To all who end their study of our subjects on leaving our hands our duty compels us to give what we can of literary and social understanding. Segregation of future Modern Language Honours students from the others might be suggested; but such prognostic classification would be imperfect, its educational value would often be doubtful, and few schools could command the staff that would be needed. In any case it would be hard to justify a scheme which deprived those most interested in our work of the liberal studies offered to

others. The study of English Literature, immensely rewarding as it is, cannot replace the study of the Foreign Literature; and we should be reluctant to make English Literature a subject compulsory for all students of Modern Languages.

On the whole, we feel that the problem raised by the universities, so far as it is soluble, can best be met by means other than the abolition of prescribed books. The first of such means is a general improvement in the efficiency of our teaching, to which it is hoped that this book may in some measure contribute; the second is the careful selection of the books prescribed, and of the questions asked upon them; and thirdly, we urge the use of every possible facility for the exchange of school children between this and foreign countries, with greatly increased provision for extended visits to the foreign countries between the end of the Sixth-Form Course and the beginning of the University term. Most important of all is the demand for a sufficient number of highly qualified teachers, and a much more generous staffing of our Grammar Schools.

4. UNIVERSITY DEGREE COURSES IN MODERN LANGUAGES

Admittedly the University Modern Language Departments are well equipped to turn out philologists and literary scholars—and every Modern Language teacher needs literary training. He is all the better teacher, too, for some knowledge of philology. This latter branch may have been over-emphasized in the past, and may possibly still be overdone in some University courses. Now in literature, the prospective teacher needs considerable skilled guidance in his study of contemporary authors and of comparative literature. Is it possible, in those Universities where these fields get rather less attention, for a little more time to be devoted to them, even at the expense of some philology?

Whilst some only of the University Departments of

Modern Languages treat extensively the life and thought of the foreign countries, all expect a certain minimum background of 'civilisation.' Here again, the future teacher is helped if his course carries him up to the present day, and includes work on contemporary foreign institutions, life and thought.

In these Modern Language Departments, it is clear that practice in the use of the present-day spoken and written language is not a principal aim. The Head of one such department, after saying : 'I attach great importance to proficiency in the spoken language,' goes so far as to declare : 'but a student who enrolls at a University in order to learn German has made a fundamental mistake.'

There are, however, in every University, facilities for the development of the student's command of the language; and, although tutorials in the spoken language are not everywhere compulsory, they are, together with other practical language classes, almost universal.

Further, in almost all University Departments, some at least of the lectures are delivered in the foreign language. Yet of the University professors who have replied to our Questionnaire, many are not convinced that their students are yet capable of receiving their entire instruction in a foreign language. The following are among the opinions expressed by them :—

'I normally compromise by talking in German when it is a thing they can check for themselves, such as a short biographical sketch, and discuss the more intricate problems in English.'

'Literature lends itself to lecturing in the foreign language, but hard fact is best administered in English.'

'Where serious thinking is required, I am personally not sure that lectures in the foreign language are wise till the third year in honours.'

‘Normally, one lecture a week is (or is planned to be) given in German, but lectures of any consequence within the scheme of studies are delivered in English. There can be no lowering of standards in the interest of foreign language comprehension.’

‘The Direct Method for pass students beginning’ (that is, those beginning the study of Spanish at or after entry into the University) ‘is out of the question.’

‘In my department almost all lectures are given in English, since I am of the school of those who believe that even honours students of a language who have spent several years in its study (and may also have spent certain short periods in the country) are still not so utterly at their ease with the language as to be able to assimilate the most abstruse and subtle points, as they would do with their native tongue. Therefore the only lectures we give in Spanish are those whose chief purpose is to allow students to hear the spoken language for its own sake. Thus their interest is not divided between content and form.’

‘We have experimented in our lectures on literature and ideas with both English and French. This experience has shown us that, in view of the very short time at our disposal and the sometimes complicated problems discussed, it is best to deliver them in English, and therefore, I have made arrangements whereby all our students are split up into groups not exceeding ten for a seminar conducted entirely in French by French *lecteurs*.’

Other Professors are altogether opposed to the delivery of lectures in the foreign language. Thus :—

‘No lectures are normally delivered in German. It is the view of the Head of the Department that students should be trained to interpret the foreign literature, thought and life in good English.’

'As I am a teacher before I am a Modern Language teacher, my first interest is that I should be understood. Many tests made in three different universities have convinced me that the policy of lecturing in the foreign language is a tragic failure.'

To others among our correspondents the important thing is that the lecturer should lecture in his native language. Thus :—

'There has never been any obligation or pressure put on any lecturer to lecture in other than his native language.'

'At the highest stage of language learning it is always advisable for the native to speak in his own language.'

The views which we have quoted reveal great differences of opinion and practice. This might have been expected, for university professors are commonly enterprising and independent people. We have elsewhere emphasized that a school teacher should develop his own methods; the university professor, with wider opportunities, may rightly claim even greater independence.

We would, however, respectfully suggest that, whatever the motives which lead students to study Modern Languages at universities, such students do in fact make great linguistic progress during their course. Improvement in the use of the spoken language is an essential element in this progress, and students must have adequate oral practice. The seminars, conducted by French *lecteurs*, to which one professor refers, must be of inestimable value to the students; but, whatever the organization of the course, teaching should as far as possible, be conducted in the foreign language. Probably little loss in learning will thereby result.

In this matter, as always, the schools have their own responsibility. If by any means we can improve our oral teaching, both university professors and students will find

greater reward in their work. In the later chapters, we shall try to indicate how such improvement may be possible.

However good his education in this country, the language student will always benefit by a stay abroad. Though most universities are unwilling to make foreign residence during the course compulsory, yet it is everywhere encouraged, and a period abroad of at least a term is almost universal with honours students. In some universities two terms, and even a year, of the course are normally spent abroad. Students would find it easier to spend at least one term in the foreign country if the practice of remitting fees for terms not kept at home became universal. The extension to undergraduates of the Ministry of Education scheme for appointment as *assistants* and *répétiteurs* in France for an academic year is very welcome. Candidates must at least have completed their second University year at the time of taking up a post as *assistant*.

It is certain that students in University Honours Schools have today great opportunities to become proficient, not only in philology, in the written language, in literature and in knowledge of civilization, but also in the spoken language. One of our most distinguished professors of French writes to us : 'From much examining in practically all the universities I think that proficiency in oral work is general.' Although replies from other professors of languages furnish no such generalization, some make it clear that a high standard of oral proficiency is a rigid requirement for a high honours degree.

We who write owe a great debt of gratitude to our Universities, and are glad to recognize that their work has notably advanced since our own student days. There may be a means of hastening this progress. In the course of this work, we have much profited from consultation with representatives of our universities; and we suggest that more extended consultation between university and school-

teachers might well help us to work more soundly, and them to build better on our foundations.

5. SELECTION FOR TEACHING

Of those Modern Language graduates who embark on a year's course for a Diploma in Education, many were selected for University Training Departments while still at school, on the score of promise of aptitude as teachers in general, not as teachers of Modern Languages in particular. At the time of their selection, their Degree subjects had not as a rule been determined; and, in any case, selection at this stage for a specific branch of teaching could hardly be very reliable.

A smaller number of students are selected for the teaching profession only at or near the end of their Degree Course. In such cases, potentiality as a Modern Language teacher, rather than as a teacher, is possibly more predictable. But even here it would seem that little consideration is given to the question of the special aptitudes desirable in teachers of Modern Languages.

Several University Training Departments, in their replies to our Questionnaire, have recognized this, and the difficulties connected with it. One experienced supervisor of Modern Language students thinks that there should be 'a sieve for temperamental unfitness.' Others suggest that in selection account should be taken where possible of qualities considered desirable in the Modern Language teacher. One lecturer in Modern Language Method states that 'successful language teaching demands ingenuity, versatility, and something of the actor's temperament.' Another correspondent, a lecturer in education, writes:—

'Candidates who wish to enter the Training Department are required to show a general aptitude for teaching. We expect those who intend to specialize in Modern Language teaching to show that they possess

the vivacity and patience needed for this work, but it is rather difficult to assess these qualities in a short interview.'

Some enquiry into the question of temperament and its relation to success in Modern Language teaching is clearly desirable.

It seems to be widely recognized in Training Departments that considerable proficiency in the spoken foreign language is necessary before prospective Modern Language teachers enter upon the Diploma Course; but, in this matter, the Departments of Education are bound by the requirements of the Language Departments from which they draw their students.

6. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

(a) The University Training Department

In addition to courses in psychology and in the theory, history and practice of education, Modern Language specialists in University Education Departments are given training in the teaching of their languages.

To these courses are sometimes added short courses on phonetics, or on the use of phonetics in teaching, although phonetics and oral practice are more usually regarded as belonging to the earlier stages of University study. Several Education Departments, whilst convinced of the desirability of phonetics classes and language tutorials, would wisely prefer that the Language Departments themselves should make provision for these, even in the Diploma year. Perhaps the greatest difficulty is that the student's timetable is already crowded.

One University correspondent suggests that if larger grants were made to Modern Language sections of Education Departments, a room might be set aside as a model 'atmosphere room,' supplied with adequate apparatus, specimen textbooks, etc. Here students might examine at

their leisure all the paraphernalia of their subject. It would certainly be interesting to take part in an experiment on these lines.

Training in teaching usually consists of lectures and seminars, in addition to periods of observation and teaching practice in schools. In some cases, demonstration lessons, followed by discussion, are given by a departmental language specialist or by a teacher in a local school.

The allocation of periods for teaching practice varies. Whereas one department requires a continuous term in the schools, most split this teaching practice into two or more blocks, each of several weeks. A good compromise is achieved by one department, where two days a week are required in the first two terms, in order that theory and practice may be combined, followed by a period of about three weeks of block practice in the third term. We suggest that the student should preferably have a little teaching practice, say one or two weeks, before he starts his theoretic study, and that, without a substantial period of continuous practice, no approach to normal teaching conditions is attainable.

Lessons given in the schools must be subjected to criticism, both by the school staff and by the visiting supervisor, and every opportunity should be given to the student for the fullest discussion of these lessons. The 'criticism lesson' puts a strain on some students; in one department the onus is placed on the student, who applies to his supervisor whenever he is in doubt or difficulty and wants a lesson to be criticized or even taught for him. This is a more arduous business for the supervisor than the more normal one of 'descending' unexpectedly on students at uncertain intervals. It also demands the fullest co-operation between the school Modern Language staff and the University Education Department. The value of this co-operation cannot be over-estimated. We are forced to record our opinion that

sometimes the progress of students is seriously affected by the incompleteness of such co-operation.

Representatives of Training Departments sometimes suggest that there exists in the schools a defeatist attitude toward the introduction of new methods. If there is any truth in this statement, we trust and believe that instances of such an attitude are very rare. On the other hand, some school teachers feel that University Training Departments with which they come into contact are unduly remote from the problems of the practical teacher, and thus tend to encourage methods unsuited to the capacity of teacher and pupils alike. Obviously there will always be a danger that lecturers in Education may forget some part of what their previous practical experience has taught them. Periodic exchanges of posts between such lecturers and suitable teachers might do much to avert this evil.

It is clear that all relations between Education lecturers, students and school teachers must be governed by reason as well as by enthusiasm. It would be unfair to blame for a defeatist attitude towards the use of films a teacher who had no projector; or to ask that the whole organization of the subject be upset so that a single student might carry out a certain experiment. It is equally galling to a teacher when a student tries to teach him his job. None the less, it is the duty of the teacher to be both forbearing and helpful to the student and (subject only to the interests of the pupils) to give him the best possible opportunity to test his application of his theoretic training.

It would be idle to deny that Education Departments and school staffs do not always fully trust each other. In our view this is proof, not of foolishness or obstinacy on either side, but of lack of proper co-operation. Such distrust, in fact, is usually expressed, not in explicit criticism, but in silent resentment. Improved co-operation between the two sides would make it far easier to share new ideas and

the fruits of mutual experience : educational progress would thereby be quickened. Further, the needs of individual students would be far better served.

We who write have derived profit from our consultation with University Training Departments, and we have some hope that the gain may have been mutual. We ask these Departments to consider how such consultation can be extended both in range and frequency.

(b) Research

There can be no finality in teaching method. All who are engaged in education should be alert to consider new methods and new applications of old methods. Judicious experiment brings permanent progress.

Quite apart from their work of the training of teachers, the Universities have an important part to play in research into Modern Language teaching. The following have been suggested as suitable subjects for research :—

1. The psychology of linguistic ability and its relation to general intelligence ;
2. How language teaching fares at the hands of exponents of 'play-way' methods, such as the Dalton Plan, the Project Method, etc. ;
3. Prognosis—what are the causes which make one pupil less capable than another of learning foreign languages? How far and by what means are these causes removable?
4. Achievement tests.

We hope that research workers will energetically pursue their enquiries into these and other problems.

(c) Residence abroad as part of training

The one year of professional training is so short that it seems impossible to spend any part of term-time abroad. But from one University Department we learn :—

'During their year in the Department of Education, all students are encouraged to spend either the Easter

vacation or part of the summer vacation in France, or in some other European country of their choice. Suitable contacts are arranged for them, and they study at first hand the educational problems of the country they visit. Last year 80 per cent. at least of the students availed themselves of these facilities.'

Such holiday visits are very valuable, but opportunity for a substantial period of residence abroad at the end of the Diploma Course should be provided, especially for those who have had little or no opportunity of going abroad earlier. Unless the student can go as *assistant* or *répétiteur*, the problem of the expense of a stay abroad is very serious. Further, the student who goes abroad for more than a vacation postpones his coming to real financial independence; while, if present salary scales continue, he impairs the probable total of his earnings and pension. Lastly, those who spend a full educational year abroad (as *assistant*, *répétiteur*, etc.) cannot normally return to England before mid-July, and can only be interviewed for a teaching appointment after that date.

(d) *Other training*

It is thus clear that, while there is no lack of eagerness to encourage or to enjoy the maximum residence abroad, there are grave practical difficulties. Might not these be overcome by discussions between the various bodies concerned? One possibility is that graduates, especially those with little or no previous foreign residence, might be allowed to spend a year abroad, instead of doing a year's Diploma Course in this country; this permission might be subject to the fulfilment of certain conditions, such as attendance at classes in a university or other institution abroad, and the tenure of a post as *assistant* or *répétiteur*. If their position on the Burnham Scale were not affected thereby, many would-be Modern Language teachers would find the alternative attractive. The whole question of residence abroad,

including the timing of these visits in the pre-teaching years, is one for earnest examination by all the bodies concerned.

A small number of those training under the Emergency Training Scheme of the Ministry of Education have taken a foreign language as one of their two principal subjects. There is no reason why the best of these should not, sooner or later, become specialist language teachers in Secondary Modern Schools, especially if they equip themselves with some such qualification as the Certificate of Proficiency in Modern Foreign Languages of the University of London. Still wider fields should be open to them if they take an external degree.

7. POST-UNIVERSITY YEARS

The Modern Language teacher must keep abreast of his subject by maintaining at all costs the closest contact with the foreign country. At all costs . . . there lies the difficulty. Not only must he make frequent and costly visits abroad, but he must maintain day-to-day contact through expensive foreign books and newspapers. He must if possible see foreign films and stage plays. He must avail himself of local Language Circles, where they exist; where they do not exist, there is an opportunity for him to play a part in their foundation.

It will be greatly to his advantage if from time to time he can attend refresher courses, both at home and abroad. The Ministry already provides certain short courses in method and in civilization. It has also arranged, or helped to arrange, some very useful courses abroad, and it is confidently expected that this work will be continued and extended. The Universities of this country could do more to provide courses in the contemporary thought and literature of foreign countries, as well as practical classes in the languages.

All these developments present difficulties, of which cost is by no means the least. It is true that a keen teacher, after some years of teaching, may effect an exchange with a foreign teacher; but this is not easy to arrange, and is likely to prove expensive, if not disadvantageous in other ways. At the moment of writing, sabbatical terms are becoming a real possibility; if, in addition, exchanges on a considerable scale can be arranged, without serious handicap, financial or otherwise, to the teacher, the standard of Modern Language teaching in the schools would be appreciably raised. It is here, in the provision of all these necessary facilities for the practising teacher, that the Institutes of Education, now growing in number, might do great service to the study of Modern Languages in this country.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATION

THE question of the human material to be taught must now be considered. While we control or can control such things as the content of the teaching, the qualifications and the training of the teacher, the surroundings and equipment of the school, we are not able to alter that which is innate in the pupil: we can only accept or reject. We may delay the rejection; indeed, up to the present time that has been the only way of resolving our doubts: we have lacked any means of decision except trial and error. Thus, if, after selection by some form of entrance examination and some years of care, effort and teaching, the pupil is found to make less than satisfactory progress in understanding, speaking, reading and writing a foreign language, he may be allowed to devote his time to some other branch of studies.

To avoid such a wasteful procedure has been the aim of recent research-workers who have sought to evolve a safe and efficient method of prognosis testing. As soon as General Intelligence Tests were developed, standardized and accepted, the obvious next stage was to attempt to devise tests which might give an indication of specialized abilities, and much work has been done in North America along these lines. Since General Intelligence Tests are usually in the main tests of verbal intelligence or of linguistic capacity, they might be expected to provide at least a partial basis for selection and prediction. Yet it must be remembered that an intelligence test can at the best measure only what an individual *can* do, not what he *will* do: the correlation between intelligence and linguistic

aptitude as such might be very high, while, at the same time, the correlation between intelligence and linguistic achievement might be very low. E. B. de Sauzé in the *Cleveland Plan*, quoted in Volume 14 of the American and Canadian Committees' Report on Prognosis Tests, has stated that 'our experiments in Cleveland have shown that an intelligence quotient of 100 or more is necessary to enable a student to wrestle with the scientific aspects of language study.' Nevertheless some pupils on a high intelligence level did poor work in the tests, while the highest score—an average of 91—in the achievement tests was made by a pupil with an I.Q. of 92. So far as research has gone, however, it seems to show that those with low intelligence quotients rarely do well in Foreign Language study, though the reverse is not true. It seems, therefore, that one section of a battery of prognosis tests would be a general intelligence test.

Another section might be a group of tests of ability in using the forms and grammar of the English language. Indeed one school of thought maintains that only those who are unable to learn their mother-tongue should be excluded, as non-linguistic, from learning a foreign language.

Yet a third section often consists in quick-learning tests in a new language (sometimes an artificial one), in which exercises are given in the applying of certain grammatical or syntactical rules either by translation or by the interpretation of syntax; sometimes even unfamiliar Russian is given to test the memorizing of vocabulary!

A study of several batteries of prognosis tests leaves the impression that the snapshot received is insufficient to form any complete assessment of probable ability in Modern Languages. Success in school work demands, in addition to certain intellectual powers, traits such as will, tractability, habits of study and continuity of effort, while

other factors, such as health, regular or irregular attendance at school, home background and conditions, all contribute to ultimate success or failure. A completely successful battery of prognosis tests, therefore, would have to include some recognition of the many intangibles which are of high importance in education but which have not yet been measured. One investigator has claimed that teachers' ratings of personal traits—habits of work, accuracy, initiative, quickness of thought, memory, and control of attention—showed a higher correlation with achievement than I.Q.s., Luria-Orleans Prognostic Tests, English marks or School marks.

A second type of prognosis test has been devised to predict ultimate achievement and ability by testing the pupil after, say, two years of study in the foreign language. One form of this type of test demands several hours of the pupil's time. In certain sections it uses the knowledge of the foreign language which the candidate has acquired: vocabulary; certain elements of grammar, such as the present, future and perfect of the verb, use of the conjunctive and relative pronouns, possessive adjectives and pronouns, singulars and plurals; skill in dictation; and oral fluency. In other sections it spends much time on tests in English: there are, for example, exercises on word association, word invention, anagrams, English words derived from French words, and disarranged sentences to be rearranged, while the rote learning of nonsense syllables, vocabulary learning and visual span are also tested. It might be thought that a simple achievement test at the end of the two-year stage might suffice, but the authors of this type of prognosis test try to go deeper than that: they are attempting, not only an achievement test, but also a test of the basic abilities which underlie language learning. Language ability, they stress, is a combination of many abilities which may be inter-related but which are capable

of wide variation. These may be analysed into :—

- (a) Verbality, which would include verbal fluency, or the readiness with which words can be recalled, and verbal confluence, the ability to use words in relationships;
- (b) Cerebro-vocal ability, since oral facility depends to a certain extent on vocal control;
- (c) Perception and memory span, justifying the inclusion of tests of auditory discrimination and of auditory and visual span;
- (d) Memory, including learning (incidental, rote and associate), retentivity and recall;
- (e) Reasoning ability, which, though not of first importance in a completely natural method of language learning, must in the classroom assume the larger rôle of deliberate influence.

Yet, if the analysis of aptitude is to be complete, then, in addition to these aptitudes, qualities of temperament and character have to be considered. Emotional factors are of special importance: the act of speech is not only communicative but also emotive. Modern language methods necessitate a readiness on the part of the pupil to respond, and those who are shy, reserved, introverted will tend to avoid oral practice. Since speaking affects the language learning throughout, the self-critical, nervous pupil will be at a disadvantage, while the extrovert will find satisfaction in an activity in which he can assert himself. Perseverance, or persistence in the face of difficulty, is a valuable quality in the language student; alertness or well-directed perseverance is particularly valuable, since, in language study, concentrated listening is required. In the classroom there is too little time for personal attention, and, since constant practice is essential, we must look for the quality of co-operativeness in the pupil, the readiness to give that essential constant practice. Lastly, there is originality, outstanding

in the pupil who can use his material in a fresh way and associate old material with the new—though we all know the pupil who is too original and who almost goes to the length of inventing a new language !

Exploring further our endeavour to secure all the factors which may influence the pupil's rate of progress, we must also consider his personal history, circumstances which may have modified his abilities and personality, matters such as the language and cultural influences of the home, any seeds of antagonism towards or predilection for the foreign people whose language he studies, the use of foreign languages in the home, the examples of relatives who have been good linguists, visits abroad, and special interests and hobbies of the child which may have a bearing on his foreign language work. It seems, therefore, that, to augment and complete our prognosis tests, we must include information on personality traits : emotionality, talkativeness, extraversion-introversion, perseverance, alertness, co-operation and originality; and also on personal history (where it is likely to affect the issue) and home surroundings. Such a battery of tests, if completely administered, might give all the material for an accurate prognosis; but, when the time taken is considered, one wonders whether the ordinary achievement test of a thoughtfully devised terminal examination, combined with our knowledge of the pupil, will not be an adequate—if rough—instrument for our purpose. In the wide and comprehensive replies to the questionnaire circulated in connection with this chapter, a willingness was expressed by most correspondents to welcome prognosis tests once their usefulness had been assured. With this, however, went some scepticism, based on the failure of Intelligence Tests to serve their intended purpose, whilst there was everywhere confidence in the ability of the teacher to make good use of his knowledge of the pupil and of the pupil's achievement, and to give

prognosis sufficiently good to facilitate reorganization for the transfer of such misfits as may occur.

The problem is more complicated in Secondary Modern Schools, where not all pupils start a Modern Language, than in Grammar Schools, where rough prognostic tests for the transfer of pupils are devised or even improvised with fair accuracy. Information on the personal traits and home circumstances, passed on from the previous school, may clear the way for a battery of short tests selected, say, from those tried by S. R. Mills and discussed in his Thesis (see Preface). There is scope for some interesting research work by teachers in Secondary Modern and Technical Schools; and, in every case, freedom of transfer between language and non-language classes is to be recommended until such time as adequate and reliable tests do emerge. Even then, the late-developer will require sympathetic treatment, and the slow-thinker adequate consideration.

It seems fair to assume that there will remain wide variations of potential achievement among the pupils of a given school. The completely non-linguistic pupil, if he exists at all, is comparatively rare; nevertheless among the bulk there is to be found a wide range of possible attainment. In Grammar and Technical Schools, further extension of the range of variation may come from the lowering of the admission qualification, the admission of pupils of inferior intellectual ability in order to ensure complete 'form' admissions of two, three or more streams.

We, therefore, find ourselves, as language teachers, faced with the problem of organizing a heterogeneous collection of individuals and starting them off on a course with the laudable aims set out in our first chapter. How is it to be done?

Obviously, in the vast majority of cases we have at the beginning insufficient information on which to base any specific classification for Modern Language work, though a

pointer might be provided by a good English Language test. When our pupils enter the school, all that is available for our guidance may possibly be a list in order of their success in an entrance examination designed perhaps to show ability in such things as English and Arithmetic and the results of a non-specialized Intelligence Test. And even this meagre information is often not available. The new type of scholar's Record Card will add something, perhaps of dubious validity, to our information; but at present it seems unavoidable that the first classification of the new entrant in a Secondary School must be mainly a classification of general achievement, and that during the first year a process of re-assessment must take place based upon the work done and the progress achieved. In some schools an attempt is made at the end of the first year to form two groups which will be the source of a Science stream and a Language stream running through the school, both such Forms continuing their first foreign language and the Language Form adding Latin. This re-classification could alternatively be made at the end of the second year in schools where German or Spanish, say, is to be added to French. In such cases it is practicable to consult the wishes of the parents planning a career (though careers work frequently does not start in earnest until the third year), and even to offer guidance as to choice of a stream. If admissions have been based on a fair but strict testing, no form should include more than a short 'tail' of so-called 'non-linguistic' pupils. One correspondent vigorously states the opinion that 'serious weakness in a subject, in the case of a pupil better in other subjects, is always due to obvious physical defect—of hearing, for example—to bungling by a teacher, or to laziness of the pupil. In the first group each pupil should be considered as a separate case. In the second group (where it arises) and in the third, the pupil should be encouraged and, if need be, forced to make the

necessary effort. The existence of natural special abilities is not denied, but a pupil who can do most intellectual subjects well can do satisfactorily in other intellectual subjects if he is properly taught and makes the effort. The case of the boy who does well in one or two intellectual subjects and badly elsewhere is analogous. He may be an utterly careless pupil who will only try to do what he likes; or he may be a dull slow youth who has not time to do his work properly in all subjects and therefore concentrates on those he likes best. Each case should be considered separately.'

To return to the consideration of the re-classification of pupils, the question immediately arises whether this re-grouping at the end of or during the first year (and possibly the second and subsequent years also) should be on the basis of average ability in all subjects or on a specialized basis. In other words, after the first year in which there can be little specialist grading since the pupils are all beginners, should our unit for Modern Language work be the Form, where we may have wide variation of ability in our own particular subject, or should we re-classify and re-distribute the pupils in 'sets' containing pupils of approximately equal ability in Modern Language work? The second course would have various advantages. It would tend to produce greater homogeneity in the various Modern Language groups taught at the same time. It is probable that the Modern Language work is among the small group of subjects (which also includes Mathematics) likely to show a great range of variation from the level of average achievement of any particular form. The 'pace' of each set could be adjusted to suit the particular group, and the methods of teaching could be varied between sets to produce the happiest results. It is sometimes argued that, if the sets were consecutively numbered throughout the School, no stigma of 'dudness' would be attached to any: but there is considerable doubt about this, as the average boy is quick-

witted enough to sum up the situation. At any rate, there is the possible counter-availing advantage of the encouragement of a 'C' boy who may find himself, for Modern Language work, among the 'A' pupils. The opposite case—an 'A' pupil in a lower set—is likely to be spurred to greater effort, rather than discouraged, since on the whole those in the 'A' divisions are those who are keen to excel.

It is claimed, too, that sets ease the problem of the transferred pupil, particularly one transferred from a Secondary Modern School. If an agreed syllabus, including a Modern Language, is being followed during the first two years, the problem of transfer should be simplified. If sufficient numbers are transferred to form a separate class, preferably small, this too, reduces the difficulty. In areas served by several schools, it might be possible to arrange for each school in turn to take the transfers in a year; in this way a separate class may be formed for them. The chief hope of a transferred pupil lies in his general intelligence and character, but the 'set' system may help in the initial contact, and without it private study and private lessons may be necessary. It might be possible for Modern Language teachers to secure fairly general agreement as to what main points of grammar and (less important) what basic vocabulary should be covered respectively in the first, second and third years. Many teachers of independent mind, however, would resent the idea as savouring too much of an imposed syllabus.

Within the School, the boy transferred to a higher set is presumably of sufficient ability to pick up what he has missed through being in a lower set and working more slowly. The syllabus should provide for the possibility, for example by grammatical revision at the beginning of a new term, particularly of important points such as new tenses which promoted boys could not know.

The objections to the 'set' organization are largely based on administrative difficulties. There must be an adequate number of Modern Language specialists on the staff, since all sets of a Form will be taking the foreign language at the same time; this may be a serious difficulty. The system would also increase traffic and time spent in the school corridors at lesson change. Only one correspondent who had experience of 'set' working was not enthusiastic about it: he invariably got the third set! Many who had long experience of teaching without sets did not feel the need for them, provided the pupils were graded into forms on their general ability. All agree, however, on classifying pupils taking an Advanced Course into Science and Language forms or sets.

The requirements of the 'General Certificate of Education' will greatly affect the organization of Fifth Form work. The Modern Language teacher will probably find some pupils who intend that year to take his subject at 'Ordinary' level, others who are too young to do so, others again who, because of linguistic weakness, will not offer his subject, and yet others who intend to leave without taking the Examination at all. The heterogeneous quality of these elements will greatly strengthen the case for 'sets,' at least in the Fifth Form. In small schools, it may be impossible to organize 'sets': the overtaxed teacher must then do what he can to minimize the lack of cohesion in his class.

Next we must consider the time-table. Here three main questions emerge: the length of the lesson, the number of lessons per week, and the number of years taken to prepare for the First School Examination. There seems to be general agreement on the length of the lesson, namely 40-45 minutes; but that agreement may be on the surface only, in face of the administrative difficulty of arranging periods of varying length on the same time-table. Many of our correspondents would prefer, say, a period of 30 minutes or

even less for beginners, recognizing the value of 'little and often,' while they want a longer period for the Sixth Form. Supporting this, we find objection to the double period almost universal, except for the Sixth Form; the only exception, where a double period would be welcome in the pre-School Certificate ('Ordinary' level Examination) years, is for such a task as Free Composition, where discussion is followed by writing. On one basic requirement there is complete agreement, namely that one period per day is advisable.

One further suggestion may be made for the pre-School Certificate stage. Oral work being more intensive and individual than class work and therefore more exhausting, it may be possible for a class to work together for $\frac{3}{5}$ of the period and to be divided into two sub-groups for oral work in the remainder of the time. This and similar adaptations may safely be left to the competent and enthusiastic teacher.

There is a preponderance of support for a five-year course for a first language and for a three-year, and preferably a four-year course, for a second language. Some correspondents suggest that four years may be sufficient in the first language for specially gifted pupils, but others who have tried a four-year course, while admitting that the School Certificate results were satisfactory, aver that later performance at Higher School Certificate stage ('Advanced' level) was disappointing. Spanish, however, is singled out as possible in three years, particularly if it is a second foreign language. Masters who seek to present any but specially gifted boys at the end of a four-year course are doing a disservice to the cause of education, though schools which have a regular supply of clever boys, especially if these aim at university scholarships, are wise in establishing a 'rapid' side by telescoping years 3 and 4.

It is sometimes necessary for a boy to study a new

foreign language to an advanced stage in the Sixth Form, in order to obtain a qualification essential for his career. The interests of such pupils are specially considered in our Chapter IX, 'Those Who Start Late.' Here, we must notice that, since there is much evidence that Latin, German and Spanish have been successfully commenced by gifted pupils in the Sixth Form, the organization of the School should provide the opportunity when necessary. Certainly no pupil, however gifted, should attempt more than one new language at this stage. Russian is too difficult for any but very able pupils, and cannot be mastered during a Sixth-Form course; the few who are fit to take it must, if they need it, begin earlier, or must continue its study after leaving school.

The problem of a new language in the Sixth Form often arises when Modern Language students wish to proceed to the University for an Arts Degree and have no Latin at the School Certificate or Fifth Form stage. It is advisable, early in the pupil's career, to make an enquiry as to what is likely to be needed, and to make a suitable choice of subjects at the first Examination, even at the risk of making his course unbalanced.

Repeated reference has been made above to the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations. This does not mean that our aim is merely to enable pupils to pass tests at one or both of these Levels. Our aims are clearly stated in Chapter I, and so far in this chapter we have mentioned these Examinations only to indicate certain well-known standards of achievement.

In recent years, many educationists outside Grammar Schools have loudly advocated the abolition of at least the School Certificate Examination. The view of our Association, heartily supported by us who write, has been opposed to abolition in present circumstances. The External Examinations have done more than give valuable measures of

the ability of a pupil and of the work he has done. They have drawn attention to the necessity for that accuracy without which scholarship is unattainable; this accuracy demands hard work, but hard work which is good and well directed is far different from cramming. The Examinations, stimulating pupil and teacher alike, have notably helped to advance learning and teaching.

It is thus not surprising that they have been accepted and understood by parents, educational organizations, professional bodies and employers. A recent enquiry has shown that their value as passports to careers is, in fact, increasing.

Against these advantages, nearly all of which would be lost by an Internal Examination, abolitionists have opposed the creation of an inferiority complex in pupils who fail or cannot hope to succeed in these Examinations. But, while some young people may need special treatment, no society can afford to pander to those who cannot bear to find their level. The further statement that the Examinations have dominated the curriculum is far from the truth, for Examining Authorities have at all points welcomed criticism and suggestion, and it has been open to any school to apply for a separate syllabus in any subject. In 1947, for example, one school found difficulty in obtaining the books prescribed for study in a Modern Language in the Higher School Certificate Examination : its own choice of books was accepted without demur.

For many reasons, we are glad that the Secondary Schools Examinations Council and the Minister have resisted the cry for abolition. The scheme to be adopted does, in fact, deserve our approval in most respects. We regret, however, the new requirement of a minimum age. Some pupils, capable of success in the Examination, will now leave before they are old enough to sit for it. Worse still, those pupils who proceed to the Sixth Form must either

delay the start of their Advanced Course, or maintain an undue number of 'Ordinary' subjects during the first part of that Course, or forego credit rightfully earned in some subjects because they are too busy to keep them up until they reach the minimum age. Of these possibilities, perhaps the last compromises best with a situation unfairly imposed.

For the rest, we can look with pride on our Examinations. During the last thirty years (to go back no further), there has been great and salutary change in the Modern Language Papers of the School and Higher School Certificate Examinations, change inspired in nearly every case by the informed criticism and suggestion of the teacher representatives on Examining Boards. It is good to feel that this gradual progress will continue, and that here, at least, we have solid grounds for optimism.

Another important matter of organization on which there seems to be a considerable measure of agreement is the question of the size of classes. Staffing regulations may cause a deviation from what is considered educationally necessary, and some teachers may like 'a classroom full of small boys,' while years of teaching classes of thirty-five or more may have made some of us almost regard that figure as 'normal and desirable.' The foreign language is a subject where individual attention and, above all, individual oral practice are essential even in the earliest stages. Classes of thirty or thirty-five up to the School Certificate stage are much too big: written work and its teaching inevitably suffer seriously, while, as one correspondent remarks, 'with such numbers only a genius, who, in addition, was endowed with exceptional powers of endurance, could do good oral work.' One suggestion, the sub-division of the class for oral work, has already been made in this Chapter; but, if this were adopted, great care would have to be taken not to destroy the Form as a teaching entity and to avoid gaps

and overlapping. The experience of a large number of teachers indicates that, up to the School Certificate stage, a form of twenty to twenty-five would be the optimum : by giving adequate opportunity for oral work (with especial attention to the weaker members) and for careful scrutiny of written work, it would pay far better dividends in proportion to the energy expended. This necessarily applies to all forms of Secondary education, wherever Modern Languages form part of the curriculum. Although the danger is not likely to arise until after the School Certificate stage, it may be pointed out that classes may be also *too small* as well as too large. They should be of such a size that the best are generally kept 'on their toes' by serious competition, while the weak are not alone in their lowly places and can compete among themselves. With a class containing a maximum of twenty-five pupils (until the Sixth Form stage) the work of the average and sub-average boy is better.

The only real alternative to the optimum size indicated above is a class so small (say, of not more than 10 pupils) that inter-competition can give place to truly personal attention to each individual. This seems to be the solution which should be applied when considering the size of the Sixth Form. For Advanced work individual attention is supremely important, as the difference in achievement among the pupils in the several branches of their study is such as to make special tuition necessary. At the same time, solitary pupils or groups of two or three doing Advanced work are not so efficient because there is less interchange of ideas, although, where good staff is available, it is better for the pupils to work in a very small Form than to be transferred to another school. Although it is not usually an advantage to have examination and non-examination pupils in the same form, groups of Lower and Upper Sixth, or of those taking the subject to Principal

and to Subsidiary standard may as a practical expedient be combined for certain work, 'thème' and 'version' for example. On the other hand, for oral work, the Sixth Form group should desirably consist of six rather than ten pupils.

It is in oral work, particularly with the Fifth and Sixth Forms, that the Assistant(e) can be most useful. However much the language teacher, by residence abroad, by annual visits or by other means, may try to acquire and maintain a correct intonation and pronunciation, the native-born speaker will have the advantage. In addition, the Assistant(e) will whet the curiosity and stimulate the interest of the pupils with consequent good effects upon their oral fluency and correctness. This, however, is by no means the limit of his (her) usefulness : talks on the country, its people and its institutions can be given lower down the School, in language and on topics suited to the various grades, while in the Sixth Form much can be done to stimulate the interest in modern literature and poetry and movements in the Arts generally. Present-day conditions of life are a matter of interest to all grades, and talks on these given by a native speaker are likely to create the correct atmosphere. To this must be added the caveat that the Assistant(e) is usually an advanced student with little training or experience as a teacher. His (her) value as a colleague will depend largely on the friendly direction of the senior Modern Language staff.*

There are divergent opinions on the question of atmosphere in the Modern Language classroom. Many hold that only by a subject-room organization can the foreign atmosphere be created. There can be displayed the poster exhibitions, pictures, periodicals and sound charts, and to hand will be accessory equipment such as gramophone and

* The work of the Assistant(e) is further discussed in Chapter VI, pages 230-233.

wireless set, or better still a radiogram. The room might be soundproofed and have its own piano. Some would house here the entire Modern Language Library, with shelves for each stage, finding this the best solution to the question 'What are those pupils to do who finish corrections, reading or preparation before the others?' Some teachers support this arrangement because, they say, the teacher in the average school already resembles a pack-mule or a pedlar, and to ask him to carry about with him the reference books he is likely to need is to ask too much. The practicability of this plan depends partly on the design and size of the School.

Other teachers, while preserving a more or less open mind on the question, maintain that the lively modern text and the vital teacher are more important than the possession of a subject-room; that it is more convenient to take the form in its own room, since changing rooms by the pupils wastes time; that portable equipment (e.g. a light-weight projector of film strips, maps, pictures, etc.), if in really adequate supply, is a suitable substitute, and, indeed, may be the only possibility where several members of the staff are simultaneously conducting Modern Language classes. Another point of view is adequately expressed by a correspondent who writes: 'I do not want a subject-room. Let me have access to a piano, a gramophone and a wireless set when I feel like it, and I will carry the rest about with me. In any case, I cannot leave behind my temperament, brain and experience, which, for good or ill, are the only things really important . . . Inevitably, when I am teaching, my eyes sometimes fall on the walls of the classroom. How pleasant to see them tastefully decorated with a Christmas calendar, a photograph of a bygone cricket team, and an etching of Ely Cathedral! What a relief to get away from French for that fraction of a second! And how much better, both for the class and for me, to

stare out of the window for a few seconds and see people feeding the swans on the Park Boating Lake !'

And there we must leave the matter of subject-rooms for the reader to decide which arrangement is the more practicable from the point of view of his own personality and circumstances, though we may suggest, as a compromise, that the Language teacher turn his own Form-room into a subject-room and take each of his classes in that room once a week.

CHAPTER V

METHOD

I. PHONETICS

ON the surface, there is a sharp difference of opinion concerning the importance of Phonetics in a Modern Language Course. There is probably rather less enthusiasm for Phonetics than at the time when the Direct Method was establishing itself; but many teachers still insist that no language can be well taught unless introduced by a thorough course in Phonetics, a course often lasting as long as a term, sometimes closely keyed to a Direct Method approach, and in any case demanding a full and active knowledge of the symbols. One of our correspondents mentions that he had such a course, in nomic script, as early as 1912: he adds the comment that his teacher was a most remarkable man. Others, however, have turned completely from the phonetic introduction, not so much from dislike of the method itself as from their observation that it does not reward the time spent on it. Some are even convinced that there is no marked difference, either in linguistic capacity or in accuracy of pronunciation, between those who have had such a course and those who have not: such teachers have, therefore, rejected even a passive knowledge of the symbols. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers widely use Phonetics, especially in the first few weeks, but only as an introduction to the appropriate language, and not as a general introduction to the mechanism of speech.

Much of the apparent discord concerning the value of Phonetics arises, however, from the use of the word itself. On the one hand, it means the science of speech sounds,

and, on the other, the methods by which some of the findings of the science can be applied to the teaching of the pronunciation of the language. It is in the latter sense that we use the word, and, in so doing, we can much more nearly approach unanimity. The teacher may or may not use phonetic script and physiological explanations of sounds : he must apply his own knowledge of the science of speech-sounds to give accurate and thorough instruction in pronunciation. All agree that every teacher of French, at least, must have sound knowledge of this science. The young learner may have a sharper ear (many teachers deny this) ; but even so, without phonetic knowledge, and relying on imitation alone, it is very difficult to teach accurate pronunciation even of the simpler sounds.

Even when it is accepted that the teaching of an accurate pronunciation is essential, there remains much disagreement as to how this is best achieved ; and, in view of the success of teachers using totally different methods, it is impossible to state dogmatically which is the best method. A few insist that the thorough teaching of the science of speech-sounds can be carried out very profitably, and make the point that this knowledge is of universal application. It is not merely an introduction to a language, or even to the science of speech, but can make learners alive to the oddities of their own English pronunciation, which is, indeed, one of the most serious obstacles to good pronunciation in a foreign language. Each district has its own peculiarities of pronunciation, which make it either extremely easy or all but impossible to teach a particular French sound. It is easy, for instance, to teach to most Northern boys (e) and (ɛ), and very difficult to teach either to London boys. For this reason, some think that the only way to inculcate an accurate pronunciation of all sounds in all parts of the country is by means of a systematic application of the science of speech-sounds with full physiological descriptions.

The majority of teachers think that this highly technical subject has no place in any but the highest studies, and that the physiological basis of French pronunciation in particular should be carried only to the point that makes possible the rational explanation of difficult sounds : the nasals, the abnormal vowel sounds, the uvular 'r' and perhaps the plosives. That is not to say that the apparently easy sounds—(i) (c) and (ε) for instance—are not carefully practised, but that, on the whole, imitation is enough. Some think, too, having tried at least one of these methods without reward, that all that can reasonably be accomplished can come from imitation alone, and that any form of physiological explanation is out of place in schools. When it is objected that pupils cannot imitate accurately because they cannot hear accurately, some reply that in that case no amount of training in sound analysis can ever compensate for a defective ear, or that the time needed to give such training would be prohibitive. None the less, it is probable that imperfect hearing may be remedied, at least in part, by training and practice.

Phonetic Script

On the use of Phonetic Script, there is still sharper difference of opinion. The arguments used on both sides are much the same as those used twenty years ago.

For the use of script it is argued that it is an essential part in the fundamental educational task of teaching scientific analysis; that script alone can prove whether the pupil can hear the sound and reproduce it, and that it therefore avoids gross error from the beginning; and that it helps to form habits of accuracy which will colour all subsequent work, not least in the mother language.

Teachers who hold these views insist on spending at least one term on the careful study of the phonetic transcript of the early lessons in the Course chosen for the

First Year. They do not allow the pupils to see the ordinary script until this preliminary work has been carried through. They maintain that, provided due care be taken, the transition to the ordinary spelling presents little, if any, real difficulty. When the time comes, these early lessons are repeated in the normal medium, and, as the work proceeds, the pupils are shown, or, preferably, are led to discover for themselves, the ordinary methods of writing the various sounds. As a rule, the pupils are not required themselves to write words in the phonetic script, but it is argued that the use of this script for the early work in French limits the field of difficulty and does much to ensure an accurate pronunciation.

On the other hand it is argued that the use of script is confusing to boys, especially the use of (u), (y) and (e), and that this confusion sometimes takes years to eradicate; that a knowledge of script, or even an accurate knowledge of Phonetics generally, does not ensure accuracy in pronunciation; and, not least important, that pupils resent this intrusion of a new alphabet between them and 'real' French. Pupils are often astonished to find written French so very different from what they have conceived it to be, and cases are not unknown of able linguists who have spent a term of phonetic drill in a state of bewilderment.

On balance it can safely be said that the middle way is the popular one. Very many teachers who themselves use the symbols require only a passive knowledge of the script from their classes, and some teachers demand none at all. They use, with very slight variations, the following system :—

i, é, è, a, ô, o, ô, ou;

u, eu, eu(r) or œ, ə (as mute 'e');

in, un, an, on

The consonants offer no difficulty under this scheme, the normal spelling being adopted. There is no doubt that this

system makes for simplicity without being in any way less scientific; one of our correspondents has even a cunning system of finger symbols for lip positions. But there is general condemnation of idiosyncratic systems coined by the teachers—"gnomic" script, as one correspondent calls them. The system of the Association Phonétique Internationale is widely used; some, however, would prefer the clarity of the Sweet system and reject it only because that of the A.P.I. is so well established.

The place of Phonetics in the Modern Language Course

Amidst all the opinions on the importance of script, on the time needed to introduce new sounds, and on general method, two things are universally demanded. For any kind of course there must be complete co-ordination of staff, and this is particularly true for the Course in Phonetics. No matter what the system adopted, it must be carried out by all the teachers throughout the Course, for in most schools it is the merest accident if a form has the same teacher for more than two successive years. As a corollary to this, it is mistaken policy to give the young forms to teachers with just sufficient French to teach the classes almost as much as they themselves know. It is probable that this First Year is the most important from every point of view. Certainly nobody but a trained phonetician can teach the science of speech-sounds; and, if classes are to rely on imitation alone, nobody but a practised linguist can speak the language well enough. The other demand is for a sound-proof room. All language learning lends itself to noisy and, on certain occasions, even to rowdy lessons, for language teachers tend to be a race apart, with their own curious methods of discipline and behaviour. None the less, it is all too frequently impossible to have chorus work in classes because of the resistance that would come from colleagues too close at hand.

Whatever methods are used, it is generally easy to introduce them. After the first words of introduction to France and the French language, and after a few personal anecdotes, it is easy to pass on to speech in general : how a child learns his own language, and the significance of his mistakes in his early efforts to talk, how speech habits become set, and what constitutes a foreign accent. Then readily follows an introduction to the physiology of speech, the function of the lungs, vocal cords, tongue, lips, nose and so on, all of which is often valued even by the teacher who rejects all other phonetic training. It is on the time to be spent on the subsequent vowel and consonant practice that there are such wide differences of opinion. Some spend as long as a term on the introduction to French sounds alone, and regret that they cannot spend longer. Others find half a term ample. Some are content with two or three weeks and many spend a fortnight on sound drill, do a lesson of two of 'real' French, and return to their sound drill for another spell with at least a little French to give it substance.

None the less, the core of the various methods of pronunciation teaching remains fairly stable. The first problem is to teach learners that French vowels are quite unlike English vowels, and are, in fact, pure. This fundamental fact can perhaps best be taught by selecting French vowel sounds that are similar to the English and comparing the pronunciation of apparent homonyms : 'huit,' and 'wheat,' 'pour,' and 'poor,' 'faire' and 'fair,' 'dire' and 'deer.' It is easy to convince a class of the difference by inviting them first to prolong the English sound until they are out of breath, and then the French, and thus proving that the French sound remains unchanged. But it requires very careful practice to make this into a habit that carries over into their everyday use of French vowel sounds.

The vowel triangle—whether a wall chart is used or

not—is invaluable, for it not only presents the normal sounds with lip and tongue positions readily comprehensible, but makes the abnormal sounds easy to comprehend and probably more easy to reproduce. Usually the normal vowel sounds are well practised before the abnormal vowel sounds are so much as mentioned, and these more difficult sounds lose much of their difficulty if the classes have learned to articulate the normal sounds purely. But the nasals certainly offer considerable difficulty to the English-speaking learner, not so much from ignorance of how to imitate the sound when it has been explained, as from incapacity to distinguish the sounds when they are articulated by others. There is general agreement that these nasals require careful practice at first and persistent revision afterwards. This does not seem to be so true of the abnormal vowels, even of (y), although, when these sounds have been learned, it is well to practise them followed by 'r' in order to insist on purity.

Many teachers think that this is all that can be expected, and that any other points will either be learned by imitation or are so subtle as to be out of place in a school course.

Some think it rewarding, however, to explain the semi-vowels (y) and (w) and the plosives in some detail and to insist at the very least on a close approximation. Very many more think it even more rewarding to teach the uvular 'r.' In favour of the last sound, it must be conceded that this 'r' is by far the more widely used both in French and German; that a lingual 'r,' correctly and neatly pronounced, is at least as difficult as a uvular 'r'; and that it is this lingual 'r' that so often characterizes an English pronunciation, whatever the perfection of the vowel sounds. There is general agreement on these points, yet this uvular 'r' is very difficult to teach well, since it needs consistent practice in the language before it can be uttered

with ease; there are even some who use the lingual 'r' in class because they find the uvular 'r' too tiring when they are not using it in normal speech. Nevertheless, we do not hold it a counsel of perfection to recommend the teaching of the uvular 'r,' for some learners at least grasp it readily, while the rest can always fall back on the less adequate lingual 'r.'

Liaison, as a rule, is not systematically taught, but left largely to imitation, for the French themselves fluctuate wildly in its everyday application. It offers very little difficulty, and its normal uses are easy to apply, being of the substance of the spoken language. Syllabification can play a valuable part, and is of far more than academic interest; apart from normal vowel drill, it is readily possible to introduce intonation and tonic stress by subdividing the words and pronouncing them, at first slowly, and then at normal speaking pace, with perhaps an exaggerated stress on the final syllable.

Intonation

There is, nevertheless, general regret that the teaching of intonation is so unrewarding. Many think that this is because there has so far been evolved no system available to those who have just learned vowel sounds and cannot attack sentences with convincing ease. At first sight, this time of no self-consciousness would appear the best to deal with intonation, but many, because their efforts to teach intonation have proved so unsuccessful, have either ceased specific instruction, or have resorted to imitation, supported only by Klinghardt diagrams. To many boys, the problems of pitch and stress appear to be insoluble, and it may be that this is a problem best left to the later years, when at least the best linguists have some fluency. But some of our correspondents, dissatisfied with the state of intonation teaching, have attempted to evolve their own

systems, and it is worth while to codify their opinions in a field that is largely unexplored.

(a) It is well to begin as soon as the vowel sounds have been mastered, although the immediate results may be disappointing. After the word has been taken as the unit, it is easy to progress to the phrase and then to the sentence. Even in the earliest years, it is contended, the sharp distinction between question and statement of fact is clear. (Some teachers declare that their pupils cannot make this distinction either actively or passively; but practice in the earliest weeks in these two kinds of sentence—question and statement—should at least remove some of the worst barbarisms.)

(b) In the Sixth, where a certain fluency has been reached, intonation practice in the early weeks can be as rewarding as pronunciation practice; for without some knowledge of intonation French poetry must remain little more than neatly written prose, while even prose, accurately pronounced but with inadequate intonation, remains most unsatisfactory. At this stage it is possible to select four types of sentence : statements (simple and complex), questions, exclamations (especially single words in whole sentences), and imperatives. Diagrammatic methods can be used with confidence. An Assistant(e) can be invaluable, above all when the paragraph or stanza is taken as the unit. Memory work, particularly of poetry, is extremely valuable. In all cases it is advisable to keep to short passages.

(c) The gramophone can be irreplaceable, especially in the teaching of poetry reading; it is better to have French readers who are actors or actresses rather than pedagogues. Constant repetition of a passage that has been learned by heart and the reading of the passage with the record can both be valuable exercises, always provided that the reading piece is not too long. The records, of course, whether

the medium is classical verse or conversation, must be good ones and well-spoken.

(d) Good records are, in fact, doubly important in the teaching of intonation, for the teacher himself must keep in thorough practice in order to talk with convincing fluency, and it is too much to expect of an English teacher that he should speak French verse with a skill that very few Frenchmen possess.

Phonetics in German and Spanish

If Phonetics and phonetic script are far less widely used in the teaching of German and Spanish, it is because these languages approach far more nearly to phonetic spelling, and, probably much more important, because these are nearly always second languages, and thus the pupils have had at least an introduction to phonetic principles. It is quite as necessary for teachers of either language to be masters of both the spoken language and the science of speech-sounds, and, if the general rules of pronunciation in both these languages are rather simpler than in French, nevertheless the same principles hold good. All vowels and consonants in both languages demand the same consistent and maintained practice, and intonation offers the same problems as in French. 'Sinalefa' and the glottal stop are, of course, particular difficulties, but they fit readily into the larger picture. In German and Spanish it is easier than in French to obtain tolerable results by imitation alone, and phonetic script may be largely or even wholly neglected: none the less, the pronunciation of German and Spanish, like that of French, demands unremitting care and effort.

2. METHOD IN THE EARLY YEARS (I)

The Direct Method

In the teaching of Modern Languages, perhaps more than in any other teaching, we find completely opposed

methods of instruction working with success. There is the grammar-grinder of the old school, who derides phonetics, gramophone and oral work, rejects all the more recent findings of teaching methods, treats his language as though it were dead—yet fills his pupils with an enthusiasm for language and culture that many others, plying records, Realien, dramatics, correspondence and epidiascope, can but partially attain. Some men can succeed in their own highly personal approach, however odd and unworkable this may appear to others. Thus it is well to be sparing of criticism of any methods, the success of which may depend entirely upon the men who wield them. None the less, we feel competent to make suggestions as to methods, confident that these methods are efficient in themselves, and capable of ready application by those who may not wish to apply grammar-grind, or may not have the considerable gifts required for the uncompromising Direct Method.

It is now possible to assess the achievements of the Direct Method : they are important. But, since the uncompromising Method is little used, it may be well to marshal the reasons which have swayed teachers more or less strongly against its absolute application. Some objections are purely practical, and these appear to be all but insoluble. The Method requires a highly trained staff, far more than usually able and enthusiastic, and almost identical in method and capacity ; even so, it is generally agreed that the Method will work only with homogeneous classes of high ability. But a staff can never be so nearly identical in method and capacity, and in the classes, especially in the First Year where homogeneity is most urgently needed, there is a very wide range of ability. It seems, moreover, impossible to reproduce other conditions which the Direct Method would appear to demand. French and German are merely other subjects, sandwiched between history, mathematics, and the rest which at once banish the necessary

atmosphere; and they are taught, at the most, for five periods a week, in which the pupil is to learn what in his own language takes him some 14 hours a day for many more years than the length of the school course. Further, the nervous energy of teachers is not inexhaustible: it is, indeed, far less than will satisfy non-teaching advocates of the Method. Some teachers use the Method less ably than others, and transfer even from one expert teacher to another can be a grave setback. Duller pupils are soon at a loss, and have been known to remain so for the rest of their school careers. Absentees find it very difficult to catch up, and some never do so. The very method of 'picking up,' of 'reproduced conditions' consists merely of trial and error, and runs counter to the habit of system.

On purely theoretical grounds, too, very considerable objections are now raised. The uncompromising Direct Methodists tended to make language the end; their thesis, at its worst, became the contention that it mattered little if the words were trivial, provided that they were uttered. Thus these teachers found themselves in almost the same position as the grammar-grinders whom they had ousted, except that their pupils said, instead of writing, what was worth neither speech nor script. Moreover, many teachers flatly deny the contention that the Direct Method teaches immediate knowledge of the thing in the new language, without the intermediary of English. Even if the English is never mentioned, it will be ever-present in the pupil's mind, and frequently on his lips: he will remember it by association, not with a mental picture of the thing in the new language, but with the English word. The habit of thinking in a foreign language is normally formed only after considerable practice, and certainly very few beginners can possess it. In any case, failure to make full use of the pupil's growing powers of reason is an error, certainly serious, and perhaps most serious of all.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these objections, the Direct Method has brought into language teaching a purpose and, more important, a technique, which have been of tremendous importance and benefit. It is quite false to regard the Method as an obsolescent fad, associated with fanatical and persecuting exponents and with revolting wall-pictures of the seasons. The day has not yet come to reject the Direct Method, even if we reject its undiluted form; and it is regrettable that many teachers ignore the advantages which it has introduced. The rigour of Examinations, especially in the later years, tends to pull towards grammar teaching; yet it is frequently not the burden of the Examinations, but the reluctance of the teacher, that drives him from oral work in the early years. There is a very strong feeling, even among compromisers, that Alternative Examination Papers, specifically designed for those who have learned by the Direct Method alone, would be not merely an act of justice to these pupils and their teachers, but would act as a spur to those who keep a little too rigidly to the older conventions of grammar teaching. At the very least, the Direct Methodists make languages active and living. Apart from residence abroad, only by oral work is it possible to develop a fluent command of the spoken language, with a ready use of idiom, a good pronunciation and (perhaps most difficult to teach of all) a tolerable intonation. Individual genius can sometimes triumph over any handicap of method: apart from such rare instances, it is only by oral work that classes can be interested in the language either as a practical necessity or as a living thing; and later, in the Sixth Form, the intelligent reading of poetry and prose is impossible without the power of speech.

The Oral Method

We therefore recommend what we prefer to call the Oral Method, rejecting the uncompromising Direct Method

but accepting most of the contentions of its advocates. Our Oral Method would insist on a maximum of oral work, varying with the Form, the circumstances and the teacher, with the Year to be taught and with the previous teaching of the pupils, but always on the understanding that it is neither a method nor an academician that teaches, but a teacher. The Oral Method, if less exacting physically than the full Direct Method, may still make heavy demands. It presupposes a wholesome but difficult discipline—permitting chatter and even fooling that can be controlled at a glance, and based on a real and friendly understanding with the pupils. It is well to emphasize this. No pupil will talk if he is in any way afraid of a teacher, and no pupil will do his utmost unless he knows precisely when controlled fun may not become uncontrolled. Well used, the Oral Method makes for interest and alertness. It can well be applied, not merely to simple conversation and to classroom business, but to reading, the correction of exercises, preparation for free composition, games and the like. It will not be applied to the very necessary teaching of formal grammar (except, perhaps, in later years, when all the grammatical jargon has been learned and all the facts merely need to be refurbished). Briefly, English is to be used to make the difficult clear, for that is felt to be the most economical and effective method of teaching. It follows that the pure Direct Method may be used for some of the lessons, or, on the other hand, that the pure Direct Method is never used, but a tempered method always. It may be well to dwell in some detail on some of the applications of the Oral Method.

In the first two years, the Oral Method should be extensively employed. Even if a Course is rigidly followed, much of this work can be oral, if supplemented by blackboard explanation. It is of great advantage if the whole of the classroom business is conducted in the foreign tongue :

'Ouvrez vos livres à la page . . .'; 'Faites bien attention maintenant'; 'Taisez-vous'; 'Ne vous levez pas.' It is easy to learn the little French that this requires, and even this little can drill the Form in many essential details, especially the use of the object pronouns, the very much neglected second person singular, and perhaps even the gentler forms of abuse. There is little to be said for a boy who at some time or another has not been called a 'grosse bête.' Pronunciation drill, new matter based on texts or pictures, questionnaires and reform exercises can all be treated almost entirely in the language, with an apt commentary in English and the use of bi-lingual vocabulary. A little experience will soon prevent the teacher from doing all the work himself.

Pupils can easily be trained to familiarize themselves with everyday matter on dates, ages, meals and mental arithmetic, and to answer readily questions of the types: 'Où est . . .?' 'Que fait . . .?' 'Pourquoi . . .?' 'Qui a . . .?' 'Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'un . . .?' It is easy enough to deal with visible objects, and the description of pictures is possible as an early written preparation. Such written work can be made a valuable auxiliary and a check on oral work already done, even by those who do not favour any kind of translation method in these early days. The vocabulary to be used, of course, must refer to things already well known and practised.

In other words, it is always desirable to use as much of the Oral Method as the pupils can absorb or the teacher contrive to give them. Yet the teacher should not be fettered to oral work to the exclusion of other methods, even of the oldest: it is for him to decide which points can be effectively and quickly presented in French alone. There is no object in refusing to deal with any point in English or to translate any word or phrase, if this will enable it to be learned more quickly. In any case, the pupil

will probably translate it audibly once its meaning has dawned on him. But the word or phrase must be used very soon afterwards. While it is an achievement of some merit even to make the pupils understand what the master is saying, we must none the less emphasize that the class must at all times work actively. Yet the work remains very tiring for the teacher, and two of our correspondents have given accounts of how this conventional business of the classroom can be made the basis of a conversational course, conducted almost entirely in the Direct Method, and yet sparing the teacher a good deal of physical labour.

The one makes use of some ten conversations, at first deliberately stereotyped, on which a start can be made after about a week's work in French. The first consists of two pupils approaching, bowing, and saying little more than : 'Bonjour, monsieur, comment allez-vous?' 'Merci, je vais très bien.' Many new, and always simple, phrases are added, until the conversation lasts some three to five minutes, after which it is possible to deal with more ambitious themes : 'Chez le dentiste,' 'Au cinéma,' 'Chez le coiffeur' and the like. During the first year, part of every lesson is given to such conversations, and the pupils soon gain confidence to talk at normal speeds, have a feeling of real progress and feel well compensated for the duller moments of grammar learning.

The other method has very similar aims, although its approach is rather different. Very soon six of the brightest pupils are selected and put in charge of a row with their teams in front of them. It is these pupils who, grasping quickly what is needed, set the pace. Each Leader is to give commands to his team and to receive a quick response. Each Leader gives one command or asks one question at a time, so that questions and answers, commands and actions, pass rapidly from row to row :

Leader A : ' Jones, levez-vous. Allez devant le tableau noir.'

Leader B : ' Smith, levez-vous. Allez sous la table.'

Leader C : ' Robins, levez-vous. Allez près de la fenêtre.'

This series completed, it is at once followed by the second :

Leader A : ' Jones, où êtes-vous?'

' Je suis devant le tableau noir.'

Leader B : ' Smith, où êtes-vous?'

' Je suis sous la table.'

Leader C : ' Robins, où êtes-vous?'

' Je suis près de la fenêtre.'

Then the leaders ask other pupils in their row any relevant questions :

Leader A : ' Green, où est-il?'

' Il est devant le tableau noir.'

Leader B : ' Brown, où est-il?'

' Il est sous la table.'

Leader C : ' White, où est-il?'

' Il est près de la fenêtre.'

The scheme is elaborated from these simple elements. Negatives, reflexives, plural pronouns, position of object pronouns and the perfect tense all duly take their place and are well practised. Very soon the weaker pupils can give stereotyped answers, and the others can improvise at will. A group kept to the task can produce abundant variations, and there will always been keen rivalry for the position of Leader.

This scheme is, of course, a systematizing of the Direct Method, but it has some marked advantages. It is very rapid, and this rapidity ensures a maximum of turns, down to the dullest boy, who need not hold up the class even if he gives only the obvious reply. It is perhaps true that the Direct Method has tended to concentrate on the bright pupils, but by this application the duller ones are drilled in

essential phrases and grammar, and the better pupils learn a great deal from correcting them. (It is only just that the envied position of Leader should entail the correction of gross errors.) The method is a pleasant and quick relief from bookwork, and can be switched on smoothly even after holidays. It is, moreover, an acceptable rest for the teacher, who can concentrate on one point at a time—for instance, intonation or pronunciation. If the Leaders tend to become over-confident or over-critical, he can improve both them and the rest by making the whole Form task-masters to the Leaders themselves.

The Use of a Course

There is general agreement that a Course is desirable, however widely the teacher may deviate from it in his own exposition. Without the use of a Course, work tends to become ragged, and the sense of completion is lacking, while the systematic progress which a Course implies acts as a very real spur. Revision is made easy, a great deal of time is saved by having exercises ready to hand, and the grammatical content is usually codified and ready for immediate reference. Similarly, reading matter is appropriately graded, and keyed to both grammar and exercises.

The Course need not be followed slavishly; indeed, it can hardly be so used if the teacher applies his own oral methods and the odd tricks that experience has taught him: but printed books certainly give confidence. The system of the 'cahier-grammaire' is not nearly so popular as it was: the 'cahiers' are often inaccurately prepared, and the teacher spends much time correcting them. Absence makes thorough work difficult, and there is a considerable waste of time in copying out exercises to be developed. Difficulties are entailed in the transfer of pupils from one teacher to another, even in the same school, and difficulties still greater arise when a new teacher comes. Nevertheless,

some teachers certainly prefer not to use a Course for the first months, or even the First Year, in spite of all the work that this demands. These find the Courses rather too full, and would rather do their own work thoroughly; but, in view of large classes and heavy timetables, such teachers are far from numerous.

The Teaching of Grammar

It is difficult to decide who should teach the preliminary grammar. Pupils are by no means certain to know the simplest facts of grammar, even of gender and number, and it might be thought reasonable for the English staff to undertake the course of grammatical training for beginners. Now some English teachers deride such teaching: they say truthfully that such grammar barely exists in English, and that they do not work for the convenience of the Modern Linguists. In some schools courses in basic grammar do in fact exist, but it has often been found that they are inaugurated only to lapse very soon. This is especially likely if they aim directly at giving a grammatical background for the Modern and Classical Languages, for each language has its own very different requirements; yet such a course should at least ensure similarity of terminology. The varied nomenclature within one language, and especially in French, is certainly a constant setback. It is perhaps best for each master to appreciate that he cannot rely on others to train his pupils in the grammatical oddities of his own language, and that he must do this himself. This realisation will ensure at least that a grammatical core is learned. On the other hand, if a general course of formal grammar is successfully carried out in the School, then the Modern Language teacher is simply a lucky man.

It is in fact extremely difficult to teach grammar. This, in itself, is a sound argument against teaching it in any but the mother tongue. We suggest, as a valid criticism of one

aspect of the Direct Method, that it attempts to teach the unknown in terms of the partly known. Logic encourages us to proceed from the known (the mother tongue) to the unknown (the grammar of a foreign language). Nearly all teachers agree that grammar must be taught in English, and it is equally agreed that under normal conditions grammar cannot be inferred or 'picked up.' The knowledge must be inculcated, and this is an arduous task.

A few general precepts can be stated with confidence. It is usually best if the grammatical point arises out of a reading text or can be readily related to such a text. It is essential to deal only with one point at a time. With moderate pupils, especially in the first two years, accepted rules should often be over-simplified : this may offend the grammarian scholar, but gains in accuracy in the long run. Once the rule has been enunciated, or induced from reading texts or from many examples, a great deal of practice is needed : oral drill, reform exercises, and, as a few very firmly insist, translation from English into the language. There must be constant revision, for otherwise the rule will be crowded out by new material or, if passively remembered, not applied in fact.

Many language teachers have faith in the value of this grammatical training, provided that it is done in moderation and does not unbalance the whole language course. It is true that formal grammar teaching has fallen into some disrepute, and it may be necessary to re-affirm what many now consider to be very real values. Such teaching draws attention to the general rules of a language, putting order into a mass of material, and it has a terminology, not easy to acquire, but without which linguistic studies are all but impossible. The training that it involves in habits of analysis, accurate thought and precise detail—provided that they are actively used in a living language—and in the appreciation of language structure in general has virtue

that the Direct Method does not possess. One correspondent points out very firmly that those pupils who are taught on translation methods alone and who continue their linguistic studies will have no difficulty, after some little time in the foreign country, in speaking the language fluently. (Yet we would wish them to have a sound grasp of phonetic principles first.) We may add, too, that the inductive method has lost much of its popularity, even if its technique is still widely applied. Teachers feel that very few boys really induce the rules and that, however strong the pretence that the pupils have done it themselves, nearly always the master has done it for them. Nevertheless, although the teacher may have little faith in the method itself, the inductive exposition often finds incidental use as a normal blackboard technique.

Object Pronouns

It is well always to introduce any grammatical point by reference to English usage; this is especially the case with pronouns, which, in English, can be extremely subtle. The teacher must also make quite certain that 'subject,' 'direct and indirect object,' and, in this case, 'imperative' are concepts thoroughly understood, for without such understanding pupils can hardly learn the object pronouns at all.

It is particularly necessary to take the object pronouns in stages, mastering first the direct object pronouns, then the indirect, next combining the two, and lastly adding 'y' and 'en.' The present tense must always be used until the 'football team' has been selected and thoroughly practised. Then it is possible to add slowly the use of the pronouns in the negative, the interrogative, and the interrogative-negative. Finally the perfect tense is taken by way of revision and with insistence on the automatic repetition of paradigms :—

Je le lui ai donné, etc.

Je ne le leur ai pas donné, etc.

It is quite successful to teach the use of pronoun-order from the football team, which is readily learned by heart :—

me					
te	le				
se	la	lui	y	en	
nous	les	leur			
vous					

The condensed rule—I, 2, 3, le, lui, y, en—is well worth learning at the same time. Substitution exercises have their place, especially when the pronouns have just been taught, but many think that the teaching of these object pronouns can be finally clinched only by the translation of English sentences, dealing exclusively with this specific point and having no distracting elements.

Only when this stage has been reached is it wise to tackle the imperative and the negative imperative, and before proceeding further we must make quite certain that the term 'imperative' is actively understood. Even so, some teachers deliberately neglect the pronouns with the imperative, explain the problem only to the bright and inquisitive boy, and return to it with due emphasis only in the third year. Most teachers find the teaching of object pronouns extremely difficult if their use with the imperative is attempted early, and even in the later years assiduous practice is needed to drive home this rule, which often appears to be perfectly well known until tested. This is particularly true of reflexive verbs, although with these some find very useful the method of insisting that their classes write the object pronoun in capital letters :—

vous VOUS lavez
VOUS lavez-vous?
lavez-VOUS

vous ne VOUS lavez pas
ne VOUS lavez-vous pas?
ne VOUS lavez pas

Verbs

'Être' and 'faire' are extremely useful verbs. None the less, we suggest that, before these verbs are mentioned, the regular verbs in '-er' should be taught, for this appears to be the only way to avoid much of the 'je suis donne' and 'il ne fait pas parle' errors, so irritating and so difficult to dispel. The pupil must make quite sure of the present tense of these '-er' verbs—'donner,' 'toucher,' 'fermer,' 'parler,' As soon as this pattern is learned, the interrogative and the negative can be attacked, and all the more easily if 'être' and 'faire' have been avoided. But it is most necessary to give adequate practice in oral manipulation and in written exercises; for only then can we grapple with the regular verbs in '-ir' and '-re' and with the regular verbs which force themselves on the class so early. The necessary practice may take the form either of individual or of chorus work. (The usefulness of chorus work is not restricted to large classes.)

Similar considerations will apply in German : the present tense of the regular verbs in '-en' should be thoroughly known before the common irregular verbs 'sein' and 'tun' are taken.

It is essential, too, that the ideas of 'person,' 'ending,' 'stem' and 'tense' should not be taken for granted, and that the relationship between pronoun and ending should be clearly shown :

JE march E	NOUS march ONS
TU march ES	VOUS march EZ
IL march E	ILS march ENT

The pronouns and the endings are best learned in isolation from the verb and in relation to each other : 'Which ending goes with TU?' 'Which person goes with the ending -ONS?' But only when the idea of 'pronoun,' 'stem' and 'tense' have been learned is it possible to drive home the point, however much practice is given.

The same ideas hold good for all tenses, and the same difficulties are to be faced in the future, the conditional, the imperfect and the past historic tenses. (The conditional and the past historic should not be studied before the Third Year.) But the perfect tense is apt to give much trouble, which can, to some extent, be eliminated by learning paradigms in the affirmative, negative, interrogative and interrogative-negative. Further, we should deal with the perfect tense in 'avoir,' 'être' and reflexive forms only slowly, allowing the one form of the perfect to be established and used before the next is so much as attempted. It is unwise to count on ready assimilation of the three forms of the perfect by any but the brighter pupils, and we can safely assume that, once a class can successfully use the perfect and the object pronouns together, there is little in French grammar that it need fear. When, by the end of the sixth term, the future and the imperfect are actively used, the class is well equipped.

Irregular Verbs

Irregular verbs cause endless trouble and confusion. Perhaps we can engender a little confidence by pointing out that no verb is entirely irregular. It is even worth while to use a little Historical Grammar, for instance with such anomalies as 'vouloir'—'je veux'; 'venir'—'je viens'; 'je peux' and 'je puis,' and even 'ich denke' and 'ich dachte.' Many pupils, especially if they have a dialect of their own, are genuinely interested in these titbits of philology, and the master earns an enormous reputation for scholarship!

But there is no easy way of learning even the present, the future, the perfect and the imperfect, which alone are essential tenses in the first two years; and it is well to limit the study of irregular verbs to the commonest: avoir, être, faire, aller, the sortir group, venir, écrire, mettre,

prendre, dire, vouloir, pouvoir, savoir, voir. These must be learned by heart and thoroughly tested. Chorus work can be very useful. Classes may be asked to spell the verbs as well as to say and write them. Written work, in particular, is essential. It is well not to be too exacting in the first two years, during which many teachers ask only for a recognitional knowledge. Learning from lists is not very profitable, except for revision when the verbs have already been well learned, and verbs are best absorbed as they are met with in the Course, where there will be adequate practice. This is true of all tenses, but unhappily the present, the first tense encountered, is by far the most troublesome. After a time, it is possible to help by grouping according to vowel changes (when coloured chalks sometimes prove useful). Perhaps the greatest advantage of meeting these irregular verbs early is that pupils soon begin to recognize them, though perhaps but passively; they may soon acquire the habit of looking them up, and with it, perhaps, some kind of initiative and care. In conversation it is usually possible, even in the earliest stages, to use regular verbs instead of irregular—'placer' or 'poser' for 'mettre,' 'se sauver' for 'fuir,' 'décider' for 'résoudre'—and it is a sound general principle to lay greater stress on general tense formation and on the regular verb until perhaps the third year, when the mass of these irregular verbs will have been encountered. None the less, up to the Sixth Form, these verbs require hard work, unremitting practice and assiduous testing, for otherwise they will not be remembered. The rarer forms may well be postponed until the Sixth, with loss to nobody.

Adjective Agreement

The teaching of adjective agreement certainly lends itself to inductive teaching, although a correct understanding of the subject will not guarantee accurately made

agreements in the future. It may be helpful to approach the subject in this way :—

- (i) Le petit garçon la petite fille
 les petits garçons les petites filles

Many examples should be given; these are best selected from the reading text, although systematization on the blackboard is rather more concise.

(ii) The rule of agreement is easily elicited. It is well to dwell on the term 'agreement,' pointing out that to some extent it exists in English : this man, these men; that man, those men.

(iii) Finally the effect on pronunciation is made clear :—

pəti—pətit grā—grū:d

The difficulty about a purely oral approach is that the adjective agreement is so often not evident in the spoken language. Although some teachers are not very concerned about this for the first term or two, the vast majority think it essential to deal with the principles of agreement from the very beginning and to insist on the accurate application of the rules. Substitution exercises can be very useful :—

Les feuilles sont ———; les craies sont ———; la porte
est ———; nous sommes ———; ma pipe est ———.

Or, to use another type :—

La plume ———; les murs ———; les portes ———;
le crayon ———; les livres ———; la ville ———.

But it is often necessary to translate from English such phrases as :—

A small house; the wide streets; my yellow oranges.

For those who are reluctant to translate, a good method is to use short dictations, perhaps of one sentence only, to be immediately corrected on the blackboard :—

Les grands garçons ouvrent les livres bleus et
prennent les plumes noires.

Once it is realized on what adjective agreement depends,

no difficulty would appear to remain. But practice is essential. It would be gratifying if all Sixth-Form pupils made all their adjectives agree. In the Fifth Form, much irritation can be avoided if, after a written homework, Forms are invited to put right those adjectives which they failed to make agree a few hours before or to underline every agreement that takes place in their work.

Limited Use of Translation into French

Opinions differ very widely as to the amount of translation into French to be done in the First and Second Years. Some use none for the first two years, relying entirely on oral methods and substitution exercises. Others, however, find substitution exercises, even if perfectly done, quite inadequate to teach active mastery. Such teachers may not use translation as a system of teaching, but they make wide use of it and often consider it essential in order to clinch the teaching of specific points : 'Give it to me ; do not send them to him ; fresh water.'

When specific points are to be tested, 'sentences' have the disadvantage of always introducing distracting detail. This is all the more true of proses. These, on the whole, are too exacting for the First Year ; they may, however, have a subsidiary part to play in the Second Year if they form part of the Course, and if the grammar and the vocabulary have all been practised first. When translation even of phrases is attempted, due preparation must have been done in class : correction can be a very onerous task if this translation becomes merely an unintelligent rendering into bad French, a codifying of bad habits. Nevertheless, in spite of all the difficulties, many think it essential to do at least some sentence translation and perhaps a little retranslation, even in the First Year, and more in the Second Year.

For these, a workable system is to do very little at

a time, fairly regularly in the later months, and extremely thoroughly, as a preparation for future work. But it is well to realize that the beginner in translation has a whole mass of facts to remember and to apply at one time : to him, the rendering even of 'simple' English into accurate French is an extremely difficult task.

Free Composition

In the first two years, there is perhaps little place for Free Composition, for usually the freedom that it involves is the freedom to make mistakes through excessive ambition. All too often it becomes a lame rendering of ideas and sentences already conceived in English, and in that case the exercise is all but useless. On the other hand, many teachers, making use of due preparation in class, use a modified system as a substitute for any kind of translation. At first this cannot be more than the manipulation of texts already well assimilated; a little later these can be expanded into consecutive prose with some kind of coherent theme. The compositions are, in fact, little more than systematized answers to questions already well prepared by oral practice, with the assistance of a good deal of blackboard work and rehearsal. Later, it is possible to obtain simple descriptions of a picture or even of an event; yet, since in the Fifth Form this is not at all easy with the less able, perhaps in the early years we should avoid such composition except with the abler boys in the abler forms. It is all but impossible to keep young pupils from attempting to use constructions still beyond their compass—for instance, verbs of wishing that require a subjunctive. The average pupil has certainly neither the grasp of verb structure nor of vocabulary to make the venture other than disappointing.

Opinions may vary in this matter, yet some things seem to be quite certain. It is best not to be too ambitious. Care

must be taken to set subjects—however simple—on which the class has at least a fairly substantial vocabulary. There must be very thorough oral preparation, and it would be well, perhaps, to refuse to answer any questions which the pupils might ask, lest they be tempted to attack themes that are beyond them.

A satisfactory compromise between genuine originality of expression and slavish handling of words and grammar (itself not in the least to be despised) is to make the Form answer in French set questions on their reading text for that lesson. This will certainly ensure that all the new grammar and vocabulary are seen in an active context, and will show as readily as any other method that the text has been thoroughly understood. The exercise is especially useful if it follows adequate oral preparation—simple questions and answers on the text itself.

Readers

If a Course with acceptable reading texts is used, it is rarely desirable and hardly ever necessary to have a Reader in the First Year. In this first stage, there is so much ground to cover that there is rarely time, amidst this welter of new and unaccustomed ideas, for a Reader to be satisfactorily used. In the Second Year, it is perhaps well to have one. In that case, the Reader must be of real interest to children, written in easy French, and with short chapters : a book that can be read almost as easily as an English book by pupils with a limited knowledge of vocabulary, and not a book to be used as a quarry for words. Books based on word-counts are popular, although it is by no means necessary to adhere strictly to the words within the count ; it is further a serious error to assume a knowledge of conjunctions, of prepositions, even of tenses, and a worse error to select a Reader in which the French has been so mangled as to be barely recognizable. The material

must be within the pupil's comprehension : he will usually treat sentimental didacticism with derision. It matters little if the stories are trivial and even 'tripe' (although some teachers are opposed to the more outlandish adventure story), provided that the stories are read with pleasure and without too much tiring work. Fatigue, the most potent cause of discouragement, assumes disastrous importance if it is impossible to maintain the thread of the narrative because of linguistic difficulties.

The stories ought to be of the kind that encourage pupils to read others like them in the school library. (Some pupils certainly read extremely widely.) The less able learn a good deal from the repetition of a limited number of words and idioms, and the better pupils speed through them with great pleasure and enthusiasm. The best method is probably to let pupils read these books at their own speed, but testing is essential : pupils may read for the story alone and do little more than skim the text. Testing may be for vocabulary or for content.

There is danger in reading too early, when pupils may barely grasp the meaning of a story and learn nothing from the French ; yet even this is a gratifying achievement for pupils and may give confidence that will lead to closer reading.

In extensive reading, the danger of superficial skimming can be reduced by the systematic testing both of the commonest words and of the content. Many teachers, feeling that this is not enough, still mix extensive reading with the intensive study of very short passages. This certainly makes for accuracy and retention, and some think it the only reading possible with the duller forms. None the less, we may justly say that, in the Second Year in particular, the emphasis is now in favour of quick reading, and especially so where limited time makes a choice between intensive and extensive reading inevitable.

Teaching of Vocabulary

Many teachers find the teaching of words, phrases and idioms the most difficult element in the whole of language teaching. Two things are commonly accepted. Set printed vocabulary books are not successful, except perhaps with able pupils : the words are quickly learned, not used, and soon forgotten. The use of French texts as a quarry for vocabulary is a cumbersome, boring, and not very successful method, especially if the principle of word-selection is not applied.

In any case, the private vocabulary notebook is not so profitable as might be imagined. It is slow ; it is very often inaccurate, especially with duller forms ; and it is very easily lost. With some pupils it gives good training in selection and in habits of accuracy, but only if the books are carefully inspected.

With pupils of average memory, it is certainly essential to teach words by means of use and constant repetition. The most satisfactory way is perhaps to use a Course or Reader with systematic vocabularies, listed in order of appearance.

Even so, regular slip tests are necessary, together with revision. Although some pupils, and not always the best linguists, learn with ease and with great power of retention, there seems as a rule to be no way of avoiding what to many teachers is drudgery. Of course, the greatest problem in the learning of vocabulary does not arise in the first two years, when the Reader and the Course often codify everything that is needed. After that, there is no choice but selective vocabulary learning and use of notebooks, if it is decided to dispense entirely with printed vocabularies. The latter, however, may be of value if the words are grouped in sections and actively assimilated by means of free compositions and thorough revision.

Translation from French

Teachers vary widely in their use of formal translation into English, but we can truthfully say that reading texts are now very seldom prepared and translated from end to end. This is in large part because texts now used are easy and require very little translation to be fully grasped.

Some teachers never translate in any continuous fashion. They read through the texts entirely in French, commenting in French on any odd word or expression. They ask for translations only of key-words and of parts of a sentence, especially of conjunctions and prepositions—‘car,’ ‘puis,’ ‘loin de,’ etc.—which are far more difficult than is usually imagined. They rely on question and answer in French, even for the testing of comprehension, and translate when there is any doubt as to the meaning, or perhaps if an unusual construction is found.

Other teachers translate in detail from time to time, not so much from any faith in the virtues of translation in these early days, as from the desire to have, now and then, a corrective against superficial reading in classes expected to read accurately without aid from formal translation. If the pupils actually translate everything that they read, that is generally a policy of near-despair adopted with a specially dull class; yet it matters very little, in spite of all the objections of the theorists, provided that the text is really understood. Some teachers, indeed, hold that in present theory class translation is under-esteemed, especially with duller pupils, and that its value increases in the Third and Fourth Years. Nevertheless, the texts commonly used in the early years make translation largely unnecessary for most pupils; and those days are well over when boys and girls with an inadequate linguistic equipment and limited literary experience were obliged to slog through lengthy ‘established books’ that were quite beyond their compass.

(2) GERMAN IN THE OPENING YEARS

The problems that confront the teacher of German are substantially those that confront the teacher of any other language, and the general recommendations we have given for French are equally valid for German. The teaching of the most elementary German lends itself very readily to the Oral Method, as soon as the problem of preposition and case has been solved, and the regular present tense learned. The duller members of a class can easily play a much more active part in German conversation than in French. Once the sounds (ç) and (x) have been mastered, pronunciation offers far fewer difficulties than in French; at the very least, an understanding of easy spoken German is within the grasp of many pupils who find spoken French all but incomprehensible.

This ease is due, of course, to the close similarity between many German and English words, to the clarity of German sounds, and to the all but phonetic spelling of the language. It is difficult to give precise recommendations about detail in pronunciation because of the wide fluctuation inside Germany itself, but as soon as the glottal stop, the abnormal vowel sounds and, we would urge, the uvular 'r' and the German 'l' have been learned, a class can have a German pronunciation and a fluency far more satisfying than in French. Nevertheless there are in German many difficulties which arise very early and which can cause considerable trouble: the most important are the use of the accusative, word order, and adjective endings. Strong verbs, genders and noun plurals require much practice, yet their learning is a matter of patience rather than of difficulty.

Cases, especially the Accusative

The teacher should not assume that his class will quickly learn the accusative unless they have already learned

Latin. Certainly far more than one period will be required to give the conception of case, even with the help of English pronouns : 'I know her; they saw him; we ate them.' A few grasp the idea readily, but very many cannot do so without much practice. Thus it is well to be over-careful about this point in the earliest lessons, to deal at length with the accusative in particular, and even to spend some time on the nominative. It will save trouble later on.

Prepositions and case form rather a different problem. It is easy to explain, and easy to understand, that some prepositions take the accusative only, some the dative only, some the accusative or the dative according to sense, and some the genitive only. (The teacher need not dwell on the last type, unless such prepositions appear in a reading text.) Pupils must learn lists of the commonest prepositions with the case they take. This alone, however, will not ensure that they are correctly used in practice; therefore we suggest that the best method of learning prepositions and case is to learn them by heart in the form of examples.

Word Order

(a) Words at the end of the sentence.

This is one of the most difficult ideas to drive home. Pupils readily understand that infinitives and past participles must be placed at the end of their own sentences; even in the future and the perfect, with due practice, mistakes are not very common. But with the conjunctions and relatives, word order presents much greater difficulties. In any case, it is not advisable to use the old terminology of subordinating and co-ordinating conjunctions : most of the stupidly named adverbial conjunctions are but adverbs after all : 'deshalb,' 'also,' and so on. But we must make clear what a conjunction is, and give drill in the commonest

examples, in English as well as in German; then, even if the pupils cannot always recognize that here is a conjunction that must send the verb to the end, they will know that such is the case with 'nachdem,' 'obgleich,' 'wenn' and 'dass.' The rule is easily stated and easily remembered: conjunctions (except 'und,' 'aber,' 'oder,' 'denn') send the verb to the end of the sentence. While to some pupils the whole problem offers little difficulty, others need a great deal of consistent practice, both oral and written. Thus it is often sound to have entire specimen lessons learned by heart, or even to have the pupils give lecturettes in English using the German word-order, a method amusing and often profitable: 'When he the table laid had, began he his lunch to eat.' Similarly with relative pronouns: pupils can recognize a relative sentence without difficulty, but the application of the rule will follow only after assiduous practice.

(b) Inversion.

It is usually easy to teach this rule of inversion after single-word adverbs and short adverbial phrases, but the use of inversion after sentences can cause trouble. It is not enough to point out that in German the verb is the second idea, for the sentence as a whole can convey quite a series of ideas to a class that cannot realize that the main verb is still the second idea in its own clause. Similarly we should avoid the inversion for emphasis: 'Den Mann habe ich nie gesehen.' The best method is probably to state that inversion is caused by an adverb, whether this consists of one word or of an entire sentence, and then to build up the idea:—

Gestern

Gestern nach dem Frühstück

Gestern, nachdem er sich gesetzt hatte,

} sah ich ihn.

But once this fact has been stated, each part of it must be practised at some length.

Adjective Endings

This very important and often confusing point is best treated by subdividing it into the normal three parts (adjectives with 'der'; adjectives with 'ein'; adjectives with no article), and by teaching the underlying logic in the first lesson on this subject without expecting the detail to be remembered. Some pupils readily see this logical arrangement of endings : EITHER the adjective OR the article must show gender, case and number. Even if the pupils do not actively see this point, they can be made to see that there is a coherent system behind it all. After this, it is advisable to space the teaching of these three sections so that the one is thoroughly learned before the next is approached. The endings alone must be learned by heart :—

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The diagrams themselves can be of very considerable use. But, since these tables can be perfectly well known and yet never applied in practice, specimen declensions of article, adjective and noun should also be learned. Substitution exercises have their value as an introduction, yet very many consider that this point can be thoroughly grasped only after much translation of short phrases :

'with white milk,' 'a new table,' etc., and it will need much revision. But we can safely say that, if pupils can apply the right endings in conversation, they need have no fear of anything in German grammar.

Gender and Plural of Nouns

Apart from a few general hints, such as deducing the gender from endings, the only way to learn genders in German is to learn each noun with its article and, we would suggest, with its plural at the same time. The task is arduous, but not difficult. The whole problem of plurals, too, is not in fact as serious as it might appear to be. On the whole, the teacher will be unwise to divide and subdivide the plurals into the many artificial categories that are sometimes used, for this adds yet more detail to be learned by pupils already faced with a formidable mass of detail. It is perhaps best to say that many German nouns follow a regular pattern in the plural in the masculine, feminine and neuter; to say how these plurals are formed — 'e,' 'en,' 'er'; and to give examples of words already known. At the same time we should point out that many apparent exceptions (*die Äpfel, die Mädchen*) do not violate the rule; pupils can readily see that '-er,' '-el,' '-en' do not take a plural ending in the masculine and neuter. In the first years, the many exceptions need not for the most part be systematized: the class can accept them and learn them as vocabulary, at the most building up the regular types of exceptions. Learning whole lists of words is almost all time wasted in these early years; it is fortunate that very many of these exceptions are in fact the commonest words, which ensures that usually they are learned by dint of continuous use. In the Fifth Form it may be necessary to systematize this apparently haphazard learning by giving entire lists; in the first years the only type of exception demanding full treatment is that of the

weak masculines—the ‘masculine males’—such as ‘der Junge’ and ‘der Bär.’ The learning of noun plurals, like that of strong verbs, is largely a matter of memory: problems of word order, the passive voice, and even prepositions and case are far more serious.

The Passive Voice

Before this very tricky point is attacked, the teacher should verify that the Form truly understands the meaning of the term ‘passive.’ The problem should then be approached piece by piece: it is essential to delay the learning of compound tenses until the simpler forms have been learned and, if possible, to avoid these compound forms until the third year of German. Pupils readily appreciate that ‘Er wird getötet’ means ‘He is becoming killed,’ and will see the contrast between this usage and ‘Er ist getötet’—‘he is already killed.’ From this it is possible to take the future and the imperfect: ‘Er wird getötet werden’ means ‘He will become killed,’ and similarly ‘Er wurde getötet’ means ‘He became killed.’ Yet even when these tenses have been thoroughly mastered, the perfect and the pluperfect are a source of unending trouble.

The mastery of these, and especially of the future perfect, is dependent, not so much on experience of the simple tenses or on lucid explanation, as on experience in the language itself. Thus it is best to leave all these as late as the School Course will permit.

Conclusion

As in French, one principle must be reiterated: in spite of the ease of the early conversational approach, there is much detail which can be mastered only by unremitting practice. No amount of clarity of exposition can compensate for over-hasty progress in these early years, and it is

certain that a gradual building up of detail, with constant testing, will save immense trouble later.

(3) SPANISH IN THE OPENING YEARS

Where Spanish is taught as a first language, very much of what we have said on the teaching of French applies with equal force to the teaching of Spanish. More often, however, pupils start to learn Spanish after a year or more of French : such pupils can, of course, cover a considerably wider field during their first year of Spanish. Even if Spanish is the first language, initial progress can be somewhat faster than in French. Pronunciation and accidence are comparatively simple, and Oral Method teaching can be most successfully used from the start. As one correspondent writes, 'Phonetically, Spanish is easier than either French or German, and can be developed as a "spoken" language in a much shorter time.' These are valuable advantages, particularly for those pupils who will struggle with only limited success to master the complexities of French sounds.

There is at present great diversity among schools both in the time of starting and in the time allotted to the teaching of Spanish. Some schools take it as the first language; others start it in the Second Year as an alternative to German or Latin; others again begin it in the Third or Fourth Year. Thus the time taken to prepare for the first Certificate Examination ('Ordinary Level') varies widely. In some cases it is taken up by the less linguistic pupils, sometimes by pupils who have switched from another language which they have found too difficult, while in other cases only the best linguists are allowed to start Spanish, usually in a late Year. Examination results are likely to vary greatly under these circumstances, for, while it is generally agreed that Spanish is the easiest language in its early stages, at the examination standard

it is as difficult as any other. In External Examinations there is no soft option among the languages.

Conditions since the War still make contacts with the Spanish-speaking world very difficult. In spite of the 'annihilation of space' by aviation and by radio, Spain is still far away, and both difficult and costly to reach. But although there are few opportunities of visiting the country, of exchanging pupils, or of having an 'assistant,' none the less a proficient standard in reading and speaking the language can be reached. The question arises, what should be the main objective in teaching the language? Should the aim be to teach the pupils to *speak* the language, or should it be to develop quick reading ability? Now, in the ordinary sense attached to 'speaking,' our pupils will not normally find much need or opportunity to speak the language; but they will always be able to read and hear it wherever books and radio are available. This is almost equally true of every modern language. At present a large proportion of our pupils leave school when they have taken the first Certificate Examination, and do not proceed to the Advanced Course. At this stage, if ability to converse in the language is still elementary, reading ability can be such that self-advancement by further reading will be undertaken with pleasure and profit.

Reading ability should therefore be a main aim in the early years, and a good part of classroom effort should be directed to this end. Much oral practice must, of course, be the foundation on which reading ability is built up, for we must seek real reading in the language and not mere mental translation. Even for the type of mind that prefers translation to Direct Method, plenty of oral work offers a stimulating activity, and 'saying' things in the language, accompanied when possible by the appropriate actions, gives a great sense of achievement.

But a language class need not be all talk. It is also

important to develop skill in silent reading, which is a useful accomplishment and of permanent value even where the opportunity or the aptitude for speaking the language may be wanting. It is essential, however, that the reading material should be within the compass of the pupil. Easy comprehension is fundamental to the technique of silent reading, and enables increasing speed to be maintained. Some class time devoted to silent reading under the teacher's supervision will yield rich returns, and provides one of the best ways of encouraging private reading outside the Spanish lesson. A good plan is to give the pupils about a quarter of an hour after the preparation has been set, the pupils working on their own and asking the teacher's help only if they cannot cope with some difficulty. When homework of the learning type has been set, this silent period is especially useful.

After the testing of such preparation, the passage should be read aloud in class, the aim of the reading then being to develop naturalness and fluency of pronunciation. Until this has been satisfactorily attained, the teacher should always read aloud what is to be read by the class.

Pronunciation

A sound unhesitating pronunciation is an essential prerequisite to the learning of vocabulary. The pupil who does not pronounce his words with confidence will usually have greater difficulty in remembering them. He should learn to pronounce Spanish well with little difficulty. It gives great confidence to pupils to realize that there are no 'catches' in spelling and pronunciation and to know that they can pronounce correctly every word that they see in print.

Some correspondents think that a brief phonetic introduction is helpful, but all agree that the use of phonetic script is unnecessary. Not much drill is needed to ensure a good pronunciation of nearly all the Spanish sounds. The

sounds of 'j,' 'rr' and 'z,' for example, are picked up accurately, quickly and with some merriment by young beginners. The consonants 'd' and 't' are really the most difficult, and it is a good plan to get beginners to learn by oral repetition, say, the numbers up to 'veinte' before they see the written word. If the beginner first sees in print 'dos,' 'tres,' he will almost certainly pronounce them like the English words 'dose,' 'trays,' which is about as good as to say 'dis' and 'tink' for 'this' and 'think.' The pupils should hear and say a good many words like 'dedo,' 'dan,' 'todo,' 'tinta,' before they see them. Yet it is perhaps best not to hold up progress until perfection is gained in these sounds. A satisfactory reproduction of them will be gradually acquired by practice and constant hearing of the correct pronunciation.

The vowels present no difficulty. A few examples listed on the blackboard, such as 'pie,' 'sea,' 'lee,' 'sale,' will suffice to show the contrast between English and Spanish vowel usage. Careful attention must be given to syllabification: this will best ensure, for example, that the 's' in words like 'presente' is not given the soft English sound.

'Sinalefa' is as important in Spanish as liaison in French, and should be well drilled from the beginning. Pupils should be made to practise the gliding together of words in answering and asking such questions as: '¿Qué es esto?' '¿Cómo está Vd?' etc. 'No he oído' is a good phrase for practice.

Grammar

The main rules of accidence are simple and easily learnt. It is best in the early stages to keep further grammar learning to a minimum and to concentrate on habit-forming conversation and on vocabulary building. In the early years the backbone of grammar study is the verb. To

simplify the learning of the verb and to widen the conversational range, the readiest method is to omit the familiar form entirely at first; nearly all correspondents say that they do so. If Spanish is taken as a first language, the present, future and perfect tenses, and the imperative, can be learned in the First Year. By the end of the year these parts of the regular conjugations and of a few common irregular verbs should be reasonably well known. The imperfect and preterite tenses, easier to learn than to distinguish in use, should be postponed till later, and translation from English involving the past tense, e.g. 'I went,' would be better postponed until the end of the Third or Fourth Year.

The difficulties produced by 'ser' and 'estar' arise from the beginning and cannot be postponed. Nor is there any easy road to mastery of their use. Copious substitution exercises probably offer the best means of driving home a few of the main uses of these verbs, and pupils should be well drilled in answering questions like "¿Qué es . . . ?" '¿Dónde está . . . ?' with the correct verb. From the start, the pupils should be trained in oral practice to omit the subject pronouns in the normal Spanish way, and the learning of each tense is then reduced to four words.

Object pronouns and possessive adjectives must be introduced early and continually illustrated by repetition exercises. The most troublesome of these are the polite forms for 'you' (objective case) and 'your.' It is best to keep 'vuestro' out of sight until the pupils have been well drilled in the use of 'su,' meaning 'your' as well as 'his,' etc. : here it needs much ingenuity to find a satisfying answer to their natural question : 'How can you tell?' It is still more difficult to cure the initial confusion of the objective 'you' : 'lo,' 'la,' 'los,' 'las' and also 'le.' It will be necessary to supplement exercises of the substitution type with at least some rapid oral translation, e.g. 'I see

him,' 'I see you,' etc.; otherwise we cannot be sure that these object pronouns are fully grasped.

The rule for the use of two object pronouns (not including the reflexive) has no complications, since the Indirect invariably precedes the Direct; omitting the familiar form, the total combinations to be memorized are 'me,' 'nos,' 'se,' any one of which may be followed by any one of the direct objects 'lo,' 'la,' 'los,' 'las.' But, though their number is small, they need much assiduous practice before they can be used with speed and accuracy. The combination of indirect and direct object pronouns, to which must be linked the use of the emphatic, prepositional forms 'a mi,' 'a Vd,' etc., so much used in Spanish, should be left until late in the Second Year; they will need much drill in the Third and Fourth Years before the average pupil can use them accurately.

The first year's work should include the following: adjectives and their agreement and position; pronouns and verbs outlined above; some simple examples of the reflexive pronoun; demonstrative adjectives and pronouns; numerals, dates, time, etc.; the vocabulary of simple classroom activities; and the commoner adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions.

In the Second Year extension of vocabulary should be based on a reader in addition to a course. By the end of the year the five simple tenses of the indicative, the perfect and the imperative of regular verbs should be known well enough to be readily understood if encountered in the reader. The study of grammar should also include comparative and superlative adjectives; prepositional forms of the pronouns; possessive, relative and interrogative pronouns; negative pronouns and adverbs.

These suggestions briefly summarize the opinions of some correspondents. They should not be taken as an outline of a grammar syllabus, which it is not our intention

to propose, and which teachers of independent views would resent. Many who like grammar and make it interesting will teach much more with the greatest ease, while others will achieve comparable results by aiming firstly at vocabulary building. There are many ways to success in language teaching, but the ultimate goal is always the same : to enable the pupils to use and to like the language and to know something of the culture of the countries where the language is spoken.

3. THE MIDDLE SCHOOL (I)

Education has so far been largely a matter of harnessing the pupil's natural interests; but he is now beginning to realize the high and serious purpose of education, and soon, instead of merely letting his mind be interested and his memory exercised, he will himself begin to harness his will-power to his memory and his reason.

This change must be encouraged by the teacher, and even speeded up for the coming External Examination. It does not mean that lessons will lose their interest. Indeed, new methods of working can be made to bring new and equally absorbing interests. But it is vitally important that the teacher should strive to get every pupil's will-power harnessed to the learning effort, for otherwise the work, and particularly homework, will continue to be done merely 'for so-and-so tomorrow morning,' and will continue to be rapidly forgotten.

It is a difficult stage, especially as the pupils are at the disturbing age of puberty, and there is great need of a policy of patience and confidence, and for a steady effort to make the class a willing team with its own standard of ready co-operation.

Keeping the Subject Alive

The mutual confidence and friendliness thus engendered will go a long way towards solving the first main problem

of keeping the subject alive even while preparing for a written External Examination. But the teacher must keep himself fresh. 'My solution,' writes a correspondent, 'is to try to keep alive myself'—and only teachers know what that short sentence leaves unsaid in these days of extraneous demands and duties, and of large classes.

'I never try to push a Form,' says another correspondent 'if (a) I am tired, or (b) they are.' One correspondent puts the limit of sustained concentration of Middle School pupils at 4 or 5 minutes. Others stress the value of frequent 'asides,' minor remarks of a lighter nature drawn from the matter in hand and yet going off at a tangent. Here is the great advantage of wide knowledge and interests on the part of the teacher, since in one stroke he can liven the lesson, arouse the interest of the class in the life and culture of the foreign people, and at the same time impress upon their minds the word or phrase that suggested his digression.

The value of Realien in keeping the subject alive is discussed in our next chapter. All correspondents agree that the problem is made easier where most pupils have French or German or Spanish correspondents and where exchange visits are encouraged. And we all hope one day to have the valuable help of an 'Assistant'. Meanwhile a word of warning is needed on the difference between keeping the subject alive, and allowing the lesson to be as lively as the pupils would wish. Excitement is not conducive to study: it is doubtful if the introduction of games into a teaching method is wise in the Middle School.

One form of livelier activity, however, is worth suggesting. The direct or semi-direct action-teaching in the Lower School may very well have led up to the acting of short scenes by a few of the brighter pupils, and this, continued in the Middle School as a quick ready-to-hand diversion, can be both useful and stimulating.

The following short and simple scene for acting is of the type which uses words and phrases of the most useful kind; employs a suitable number of boys; is interesting without lending itself to the distraction caused by over-enthusiastic acting; and yet gives plenty of scope to the natural boy-actor. It need only take 5 or 10 minutes, and, once it has been picked up by the brightest half-dozen pupils, it can easily be performed by other 'teams' in order to give a turn to every pupil.

Variation and elaboration are both simple : for example, the arrest at the customs of a crook (provided always that the actual arrest does not become a *mêlée*). It is perhaps, safer to vary the customs scene with a sedate '*Arrivée à l'hôtel*' or an ordinary '*Visite aux grands magasins.*'

En Voyage

A la passerelle

Par ici, Monsieur. Voici la passerelle. Faites attention. Ne tombez pas. Ticket de débarquement, s'il vous plaît.

Passeports

Avez-vous votre passeport? Faites voir. Vous êtes anglais? Quelle est votre nationalité? Ôtez votre chapeau, s'il vous plaît. Merci, c'est bien.

À la douane

Où sont vos bagages? C'est tout? Cette malle est à vous? Vous n'avez rien à déclarer?—pas de tabac? cigares? cigarettes? allumettes? instruments de musique? Ouvrez cette valise. C'est bien. Vous pouvez fermer. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a dans cette boîte?—dans cette poche? Faites voir. Vingt francs à payer. Merci, c'est bien.

Porteur

Porteur, Monsieur? (Oui, prenez mes bagages). Où allez-vous, Monsieur? (À Paris). Quelle classe, Monsieur?

(Troisième). Vous avez votre billet? (Non, où est le guichet?) Là, Monsieur, à droite.

Au guichet

Paris, troisième, aller et retour. (Combien de places, Monsieur?) Une place. (Voilà—trente francs). Merci bien. A quelle heure part le train? (À deux heures quarante). Porteur, où est le quai de départ? (Par ici, Monsieur). Trouvez-moi une place en troisième. (Bien, Monsieur). Où est le buffet? (Par là, Monsieur).

Au buffet

Café, Monsieur? limonade, citronnade? (Café au lait). Bien, Monsieur. Et avec ça, Monsieur?—une tablette de chocolat, des brioches, des croissants, des gâteaux secs? une orange? une banane? une glace vanille? (Est-ce que je peux changer de l'argent ici? C'est combien la livre aujourd'hui? Bon, alors, voulez-vous changer trois livres, s'il vous plaît?)

Seven boys will be required in each group : an official at the foot of the gangway, a passport officer, a customs officer, a porter, a clerk, at the ticket window, a restaurant waiter and a traveller. The traveller should be the most fluent boy as he is the only one who will have more than a very little scope for elaborating and varying the given sentences.

When the master has assigned various positions in the classroom to represent gangway, custom-house, ticket-window and so on, the official at the gangway beckons the traveller and begins 'Par ici, Monsieur,' etc., collecting an imaginary landing-ticket, and passing the traveller on to the passport officer, who, like all the others, must see that he gets the appropriate answer from the 'voyageur' to each of his questions.

It is a good thing to put the seven best pupils in the first

group, but 'best' does not here mean necessarily the best on paper, as there is scope for other qualities—initiative, lack of self-consciousness, and even a little acting ability. It is surprising how some boys with no head for formal grammar can make a success of a minor acting part.

The master, of course, concentrates chiefly on the first group, who will set the standard for the others. If a boy in one group is absent, others who know his part will be only too ready to take his place. When all the groups have been given a little practice, it will be possible to interchange the parts within each group until some, if not most, boys can take any part at a moment's notice.

In a really good group the traveller can be allowed to take with him (and to look after) his 'wife' and 'child.'

Grammar

The next problem is to keep the subject within the powers of the pupils. This is particularly important in the matter of grammar, especially in the understanding of elementary terms and principles. Nearly all correspondents agree that most textbooks run ahead of the pupil's grasp of simple English grammar. Boys will rarely admit that they do not know what an adverb is, or which is the object, and it is fatally easy to do exercises on a grammar rule in the foreign language with apparent success until a later test reveals that the whole time has been wasted because the pupils had no real understanding of the terms used. 'Many pupils,' writes a correspondent, 'have no idea at all of what is meant by present, past or future as applied to verbs; or by the subject of a verb; or sometimes even of the difference between singular and plural, masculine and feminine.' Others complain that primary schools no longer teach even the parts of speech. Some have to give up time to the teaching of grammar, 'even in the Sixth.' And that is not the end of the trouble; for the complaint that Modern

Language students even at the University stage are handicapped by ignorance of English Grammar comes from no less an authority than Dr. L. W. Tancock of the Department of French of University College, London.

It does not follow of course that language teachers may disclaim responsibility for the teaching of fundamental grammar. It is part of our job to teach the difference between subject and object. Some schools have the advantage of close co-operation between the teachers of English and those of Modern Languages. What is of the greatest importance for us is to make sure that the pupils understand what each part of speech is and does before tackling the rules in the foreign tongue.

In the Middle School, as, indeed, throughout the school course, the grammar syllabus must be carefully graded. At each step careful explanation, with plenty of examples, must be followed by exercises to give the pupils thorough practice.

It is often necessary to postpone grammar dealt with by the textbook. Some of it is too complicated, or in some obscure way it confuses and discourages the pupils—who rarely understand that the language just grew, like Topsy, and was not pre-arranged in rules as the grammar-book would seem to suggest. Again, some grammar cannot be arranged in a sufficiently simple manner and must await greater familiarity with the language, as in the case of the prepositions required by different French verbs. It is very doubtful if it is wise to risk confusing the minds of the pupils with the French subjunctive before the first Certificate Examination, apart from explaining common examples in the reader.

Practice varies considerably in the amount of grammar tackled directly. Many correspondents prefer to deal with grammar points as they arise during close study of a foreign text. We recommend a judicious mixture of the

two methods, always keeping carefully in mind the ability and response of the pupils.

It is unnecessary to give a detailed scheme of grammar explanations and exercises when there are good textbooks available, but the choice of a textbook is not an easy matter. Here is a comparison of two Courses taken at random, showing the relative speed at which verbs are dealt with :—

	<i>Course A</i>		<i>Course B</i>	
	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Lesson</i>
Pres. Tense of first 10 irreg. verbs.	I	8	I	22
Perfect Tense	I	11	II	2
Imperfect Tense	I	15	II	22
Past Historic Tense	I	20	II	24
Past Participle Agreement...	I	22	II	3
Future Tense	I	25	II	15
Conditional Tense	I	28	II	23
Past Anterior Tense	I	35	III	35

There is, obviously, here an enormous difference in method : and only experience can show that the speed of Textbook A is illusory and will lead ultimately to disappointment in the teacher and confusion in most of the pupils. If one holds firmly to the principle of making quite sure that one is not dealing with grammar beyond the firm and intelligent grasp of the pupils, then not only will the slower and more thorough Textbook B prove much the more satisfactory Course, but also it will be found that Part I, intended for the First Year, can profitably be used in the Second and (with B Forms) in the Third Year.

The course must be slow enough to allow time for abundant exercises : though here again the book should be chosen with care, for the exercises must be of the type which require thoughtful (as opposed to mechanical) use of the grammar already learned. This point, indeed, needs emphasis. Boys will often acquire the ability to 'do' exercises, even correctly, with only a fleeting attention to the

grammar involved, in the same way as one forgets a telephone number as soon as one has looked it up and dialled it.

Incidentally, a first-rate antidote to this careless attitude to grammar is to set grammar-précis as preparation. Let each pupil condense a page or section to a form which is not only as short and as clear as possible without omitting any essential point, but which he himself is sure he can memorize. (A good training also for advertising layout !) First efforts are often poor, but a brief discussion of their merits and demerits and the setting of the same task again will ensure, as much as anything, that the whole class gets a grip of the grammar in question.

The tendency of most textbooks to rush ahead too quickly with the verbs is one of their chief faults, and the following suggestions are intended to indicate where the brake should be applied :—

1. With young beginners, one can well spend up to a whole year on work involving only the present tense.
2. The perfect tense, although it may well have been used incidentally in the oral work of the First Year, involves the agreement of the past participle, and should not be dealt with on paper until the teacher is quite sure, by thorough testing, that the whole class knows what a past participle is. Even then there must be considerable practice in its use.
3. The past historic, which at once tends to confuse in the pupils' minds the other past tenses (perfect and imperfect) already learned, should be postponed until really necessary, preferably until the Third Year, and it should be accompanied by a clear explanation of the use of tenses, together with a simplified working summary to help the pupils over immediate difficulties. This is a real difficulty in Free Composition, and later in Proses, and perhaps the most helpful

suggestion at first is that the pupils should arrive at the past historic by elimination of the other past tenses : that is, test for the imperfect *first* (descriptive? continuous? repeated? etc.), then for perfect (recent past? conversation? a letter?)

4. The subjunctive should certainly be postponed until the Fifth Year. Many leave it strictly alone until the first Certificate Examination has been taken. Let no one worry about its effects on marks or results. Of those who have 'done' the subjunctive, few get it right, while quite a number show how much concentration they have devoted to this difficulty by making one, if not more, elementary mistakes in the very sentence in which the subjunctive occurs.

We have advised that, in his active use of the language, the pupil should proceed slowly towards the more difficult grammar. None the less, he can easily be allowed in his reading to acquire a passive acquaintance with tenses not otherwise studied. The 3rd person of the past historic will prove especially useful : and, provided that they are not required to write it, few pupils find this particularly confusing to read. A Middle School pupil will in any case be acquainted with much more than he has thoroughly learned, and there is no harm in admitting this inevitable fact.

Special Grammar Difficulties

(a) Celui :

For our 1929 *Memorandum*, one correspondent wrote excellently :—

'I always shirked the demonstrative pronouns until the Fourth Year, when they were taken as a rather dead and meaningless thing in a grammar lesson. Then I hit upon the following plan in a Second Year :

'Teacher, pointing to the picture : Voici deux chevaux.

'Boy, pointing to each in turn : Celui-ci est brun, celui-là

est blanc; or Celui-ci marche, celui-là se repose, etc., finding several ways of distinguishing one from the other.

'Teacher, taking up two exercise-books : Voici deux cahiers.

'Boy: Celui de Jones est propre, celui de Smith est taché, etc.

'Teacher, bringing two boys forward and making one sit : Voici deux garçons.

'Boy: Celui qui est assis s'appelle Jones, celui qui est debout s'appelle Smith.

'This led quickly to a very notable increase in observation and also in liveliness and humour, especially when members of the class, not excluding the master, were compared. In this way boys soon learned the only three kinds of things that can follow "celui."'

(b) *Use of Tenses*

The difficulty of imperfect versus past historic or perfect should be tackled in several different ways. Some pupils will grasp it in one way, some in another. It is well in any case to begin with the helpful but very simplified plan already indicated, and of which the following is a slight variation :—

A. Test for the imperfect *first*, that is :— Is it continuous? (He was playing rugby). Is it repeated? (He played every week). (He used to play rugby).

Is it descriptive? (He was a good player).

B. If it is none of these, but a single complete action (he stopped, I laughed, the tree fell), then we must choose between perfect and past historic :—

Perfect

Recent Past.

Conversation.

Letters.

Past Historic

Usual tense in books.

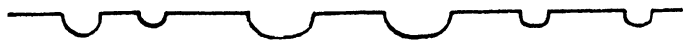
Next it will be necessary to correct the usual mistaken

inference that the imperfect is for long actions and past historic for short ones. A long action can be *stated* as a single complete one and then goes into the past historic (or perfect), e.g., 'Elizabeth reigned before the Stuarts.' Similarly, a very short action can be in the imperfect, e.g. 'While the bullet was leaving the rifle,' etc.

The next approach to better understanding of this difficulty is by way of those frequent compound sentences in which one action occurs inside the other, e.g., 'As I came through the garden, I met John.' The second action, 'I met John,' occurs inside the first : it is 'bracketed' by the 'coming through the garden.' The first action is continuous, relative to the second. The second is a complete action, relative to the first. In other words, when I met John I was already coming through the garden, and, so far as this sentence indicates, I went on coming through the garden.

Explanations with the help of the line of time are worth trying, though they are useless with those pupils (and they are many) for whom time does not exist as a line at all. Draw time as a straight line across the blackboard and show first of all that a typical imperfect tense action can be represented by a (long or short) stretch of the line, usually without an exactly known beginning or ending point, and that a typical past historic (or perfect) action is best represented not by a stretch of the line at all but by an arrowhead touching it at a certain point.

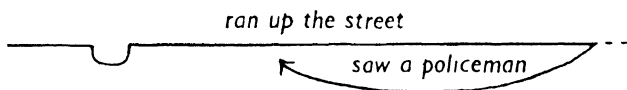
Then show that an ordinary account of past events does not include everything that happened during every second of time, but takes up only certain parts of the line, thus:—



Now show that, as long as the story proceeds from one action to the next without returning, that is, as long as you could say 'and then' before every action, all the verbs

are in the past historic (or perfect), e.g. 'he got up, (and then) left the room (and then) seized his hat (and then) rushed into the street,' etc.

But if the narrator retraces his steps to include a new action within one that he has already started, that is, if he says: 'As he ran up the street, he saw a policeman,' then we have this kind of thing:—



—with the action of 'he saw a policeman' coming back into the middle of 'as he ran up the street.' The first action, 'running up the street,' has now become a continuous one, relative to the new action of seeing a policeman.

Whatever explanations are used, most pupils will need much practice, both in understanding the tenses that they come across in the reader and in using the tenses in their own Free Composition. Their attention should be drawn only to clear cases, and they should be told that there are many borderline cases, where one Frenchman would use the imperfect and another the past historic.

Vocabulary

If the best policy in the matter of grammar is to go slowly, progress in the acquisition of vocabulary, on the other hand, while still at every stage as careful and accurate as possible, must be speeded up. The minimum vocabulary which can be safely recommended for the first Certificate Examination (or in any case for the end of the Fifth Year) is 2,000 words. How is this formidable total to be built up? The comment that it is 'the most difficult problem of all' comes from a very experienced teacher.

There are many methods, but none entirely satisfactory. Most teachers have abandoned the word-list method, as

they find that words thus learned are easily forgotten. (It may be added there is something to be said for the use of a printed vocabulary for later and concentrated revision when it is fairly certain that most boys have at least come across most of the words.)

Again, the attempt to learn a large vocabulary by means of extensive reading, leads, in the opinion of many correspondents, to a sacrifice of accuracy. The use of private notebooks for vocabulary, advocated by many correspondents, is for others an unsatisfactory method. Not only does it demand much careful revision and checking by the already overburdened teacher; but also it may even happen that the boy with the neatest notebook has not realized that the words are needed in his head as well as in his notebook.

Whatever method is adopted, it is advisable to attempt a basic minimum at each stage. This would naturally link up with oral and written work and with the subject-matter most appropriate to each year, e.g. First Year : classroom objects, parts of the body, classroom activities; Second Year : the day's routine, getting up, having breakfast, etc., school routine; and then later : the street, shopping, railways, journeys, writing a letter, a walk in the country, the farm, etc.

Here are some further hints on vocabulary :—

1. Using word-frequency readers; if these are unobtainable, the master should carefully select the words which he advises the pupils to learn.
2. Careful regular revision of the matter read.
3. Free Composition on a repetitive-variation vocabulary.
4. Introducing antonyms, synonyms, homonyms, etc., of words encountered.
5. Grouping words in families (especially useful in German).

6. Giving etymology of words which are historically interesting to the pupils ('*Beutel*,' '*besitzen*,' '*bureau*,' '*épicier*').

Reader

The whole question of vocabulary is, of course, bound up with that of a reader. Shall the reading be extensive or intensive? Correspondents were asked for a method of raising vocabulary to First Certificate requirements without sacrificing the value of close study of short passages. Practice varies considerably. 'I work as extensively as I can.' 'I work as intensively as possible.' If intensive reading tends to sacrifice vocabulary to accuracy in method and result, extensive reading tends to sacrifice accuracy to vocabulary. In either case, however, the besetting danger can be minimized. Here, for example, is the advice of a correspondent who relies on short passages for the increase of vocabulary :—

1. Context must be significant.
2. Pupil's attention drawn by *selective* noting down.
3. Items must be learned as separate words and expressions (N.B. pronunciation, spelling, meaning).
4. They must be used again in new context (oral résumé, free composition, sentence forming).

One of the advantages of intensive study of short passages is that real literature can then be used, providing a mental and even a spiritual pabulum for both pupils and master. And when the stage of willing co-operation has been reached, one can often get the pupils to do quick light reading in the holidays by supplying them with simple and exciting rapid readers. The Oxford University Press has an excellent series based on word-frequency. Rivalry can be a good stimulant if a list of pupils and of suggested light readers is posted in the classroom and kept up to date.

The choice between intensive and extensive reading is

not, of course, made on grounds of vocabulary alone, and it is necessary constantly to remind ourselves that we are not merely teaching a language. We are helping in the full education of the pupil, and must choose that method of teaching which will best serve as the medium of our own talents and personality.

Here is an example of the intensive method in studying a reading passage :—

The master reads the passage to the class, adding a translation to each sentence, so that within a few minutes the pupils have satisfied their curiosity as to what it is about, and have not only heard the correct pronunciation of a passage to which they are paying close attention, but have also been enabled to appreciate its qualities through the interpretative intonation of the master.

Then the class turns back to the first sentence, which a good pupil is asked to read in French. As he reads it the master will mentally note half a dozen words interesting either for their meaning or for their grammatical function in the sentence, and these will be used for questions round the class. What is the meaning of 'aperçus'? What verb does it come from? In front of which vowels do you never get a cedilla? Why does 'aperçus' end in an 's'? What is the complete rule for the agreement of the past participle? What sort of a pronoun is 'lui'? Why is an emphatic form used here? What are the chief uses of the emphatic pronouns? Give me another word meaning 'parfois'? and so on.

This method tackles the grammar difficulty in several ways at once :—

1. It provides a constant revision of grammar already known.
2. It enables the master to find out what grammar is imperfectly understood and to make it clear.
3. It enables the pupils to induce new grammar rules

for themselves from the examples which occur in the text. Experience will show that this inductive method can be of great value.

Moreover, the pupils are extending their vocabulary at the same time; and the master has excellent opportunities of finding out which pupils fail to answer which grammar question. He will frequently switch the question to the boy who fumbled over it last time. This is important not only in helping on the weak pupils and holding the attention of the lazy ones, but also in keeping the class together with a minimum of range between the best and the worst pupils. The more the class keeps together in its progress, the greater that progress will be.

But it is not only points of grammar that will occur to the teacher. Certain words will suggest interesting remarks, designed both to impress practical knowledge on the minds of the class and also to awaken in them wider interests in the life and culture of the foreign people. Moreover, the occasional relief from concentrating on points of grammar will help to keep the class fresh and alert.

The passage will then be set as 'prep.' The pupils must first of all know the vocabulary, or at least all those words and phrases to which the master has drawn special attention. They will be ready to answer again any grammar question that occurred during the lesson. They will be prepared to write with fair accuracy any part used as dictation. Finally, in order that they may firmly retain at least part of the passage, they will learn by heart some short extract, say 7 or 8 lines, which the master will have selected very carefully both as fine prose and as a repository of valuable words and phrases.

With some Forms however, this is too quick; and it is then better to let the first 'prep' be one of retranslation. Once the passage has been both explained and used for retranslation, the pupils will find it a comparatively easy

task to learn most, if not all, of it by heart. Indeed, if the class is told that the retranslation 'prep' will be followed by repetition, then the translation itself will be done more carefully. There is then no need to test vocabulary separately except after revision of several passages.

Another form of intensive study is provided by 'lecture expliquée,' carried out mainly by the teacher on Direct Method lines. If passages well within the range of the pupils are chosen, it can be used with success even in the Middle School.

Similarly for extensive reading it is important to use carefully graded material. Even an adult often shows interest in a nursery story or well-known fable as told in Spanish, German or French, for, knowing the story, he can learn much of the language without aid. The young beginner, too, does not scoff at simplicity if he can feel that he is really reading another tongue. This importance of interest and easy comprehension has, indeed, been remembered in many Rapid Readers, where passages containing plenty of action and dialogue abound. Several publishers offer graded series in this type of book. Easy one-act plays can also be used at this stage.

Some twenty years ago Dr. Michael West wrote: 'The pupils should at the earliest possible moment derive pleasure and a sense of power from the foreign language study.' (*Bilingualism*; Calcutta, p. 269). In these words a three-fold aim is implicit: acquisition of useful vocabulary, recognition of construction, and simple appreciation of story-telling in another language. But the skill required for such profitable rapid reading has to be fostered and developed from modest beginnings. To help the pupil to grasp the content of a passage as a whole there will be use of analogies, synonyms and deductions from the context ('explication'). There will be a transfer of emphasis from grammar to reading, any explanation of grammar, in

English, of course, being offered for comprehension rather than drilled for reproduction.

To achieve the desired end concentration on formal grammar is avoided, and preferably the story is read aloud, for, otherwise, much enjoyment is missed. At intervals, however, the text must be used in other ways, and learning must be tested. With little guidance the pupil can make his own choice of words and phrases, can summarize a section in the language or even reproduce an episode with the help of an outline. Equally valuable is the learning of a few prose passages by heart. Understanding can be tested by an occasional 'version' exercise, by a 'slip' word-test, by comprehension questionnaires in English or the foreign language on long sections or on some of the pictures, by sentence retranslation and by short dictation practice. Work on these lines means good training now and the formation of a reading habit that should remain for the better pupils a real asset in adult life.

Pronunciation

Here again is a difficult problem. How can we keep up pronunciation in the short time available? It will largely depend on how thoroughly the foundations have been laid in the Lower School. As one correspondent says : ' I have rarely found it possible to correct faults which persist after the First Year.' With time so short and classes so big it is almost impossible to hear every pupil read individually and to correct his mistakes. 'I correct gross errors as they arise,' writes a correspondent, 'and leave the rest to Providence.' But many others aim at the ideal of the correspondent who says : 'Making sure that by hook or crook the class hears and says an appreciable quantity of correct French in *every* lesson.' Many correspondents, however, find it most practicable to aim at frequent drill, usually chorus work, either for a minute or two at the beginning of

each lesson or for 5 or 10 minutes once a week. Chorus work, not of the whole class, but row by row, is a variant with the advantages of rivalry and of easier detection of faults.

Dictation

In dictation the pupils will also hear the correct pronunciation of the foreign language under conditions which compel their closest attention. Dictation is particularly useful at the beginning of a lesson in concentrating the attention of the whole class quickly upon the subject. As each phrase is dictated the pupil must in a short space of time not only catch the sounds clearly, but translate them mentally into words, follow the meaning of the sentence, write the words down and check the spelling, before the next phrase is dictated. Dictation not only ensures that the whole class is simultaneously occupied, but trains their ears and their powers of concentration, and exercises their knowledge of vocabulary and, particularly in French, of grammar as well. It should be given as frequently as time will permit.

A useful hint to save time with French dictations is to dictate occasionally longer passages, asking the pupils to write down in a column certain grammatical forms only. These will naturally be for the most part the verbs, or rather phrases containing the verb and any words such as pronoun-objects which affect its spelling.

Retranslation

Comparatively little use seems to be made of the exercise of retranslation, which, again like dictation, is a useful exercise at every stage after the first. This method (used 400 years ago by Ascham with that bright linguistic pupil the Princess Elizabeth) consists in translating a passage from the foreign language into English and then back into the foreign language. The pupils thus work from good

French back to good French, instead of from English to clumsy and inaccurate French as in ordinary prose-work. It must, of course, be carefully done; but if the passage is first of all carefully explained, and if the English translation is inspected while the pupils are translating it back into the foreign language, it will prove a valuable piece of work. The pupils take much more kindly to this work than to proses; and they will do it all the better if the method is to use the same passage subsequently for repetition. Work thus done will prove invaluable later on. The close study followed by retranslating will make the passage a repository of words and phrases and idioms and grammatical instances, which the subsequent learning by heart will keep firmly in mind.

Repetition

There is no need to stress the value of passages learned by heart. Every experienced teacher knows that one of our greatest difficulties is not to get knowledge into our pupils' heads, but to ensure that it shall stay there. The juvenile memory is remarkable in two contrasting ways. It will abandon within a few hours what the pupil honestly 'thought he knew'; and yet its grip on knowledge learned in certain ways and under certain conditions will last, to the astonishment of the individual himself, not only long after his schooldays, but even after much else, learned in the meantime, has been forgotten. No doubt the older educational method of learning most things by heart was a mistake: but it is amazing how many old people can still recite at a moment's notice the capes of England or some passages learned by heart as a child.

Learning by heart can, therefore, be of great value, but only if we keep certain principles in mind:—

1. The pupils must not be given too much at a time.
2. They must fully understand what they are given to

learn : its meaning, its significance, and the special reasons for which it was chosen.

3. It must be worth remembering from every point of view.
4. It must not be beyond the powers of appreciation of the better pupils. Therefore, while German verse can very well be taken at quite an early stage (and is, indeed often more suitable than German prose), in French, on the other hand, prose should form at least the bulk of repetition before the Sixth-Form studies in French versification (with however the important exception of La Fontaine's *Fables*).

In some schools each pupil is given a special notebook in which to copy out the pieces he learns. This development of repetition into a cumulative process facilitates revision and encourages pride in each pupil's 'anthology.'

Free Composition

Free Composition in the Middle School is not to be recommended with the same assurance as Dictation or Retranslation. The teacher must feel his way and make sure that he only proceeds if the results justify his efforts.

In a way, of course, Free Composition has already had its beginnings in the oral work of the first year or two. It is when Free Composition becomes a written exercise that its value in the Middle School curriculum is problematical. The difficulty lies not so much in the pupils' lack of sufficient grammar or vocabulary : indeed, they seem to have plenty of both for the making of short, simple sentences. Nor do they lack the imagination needed for a simple description or story. Their imagination even accentuates their chief fault, which is to try to write their Free Composition, not with the French they know, but with the French which they do not know. This tendency persists, as every examiner knows, to the stage of the first Certificate

Examination, where candidates will get involved in the most difficult constructions rather than abandon the first sentence that came into their heads.

It is, therefore, wise to let early practice be one of co-operation between teacher and pupils, with the Composition gradually taking shape on the black-board. In this way the pupils will learn how to choose some sentences and to discard others; how to elaborate simple statements; how to avoid repetitions; and, last, but not least, the master will avoid the burden of having to correct a bundle of muddled French.

Subsequent practice by the pupils on their own should naturally be based on their reading-matter. Even so, a high degree of preparation is highly advisable; and a canvas of some kind, such as a list of verbs to be used, may help to guide the otherwise random steps of the excessively adventurous.

(2) GERMAN IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

On the assumption that five years will be devoted to preparation for the 'ordinary' papers of the General Certificate of Education it would appear that the course for the second language will normally occupy four years. At present many schools have a four-year course leading to School Certificate, and, in this case, three years are generally allotted to the study of the second language. Thus 'Middle School German' has rather a different meaning from 'Middle School French': in German, the second year of learning, being the Third Year of the School Examination Course, is largely consumed in acquiring the basic elements of the language. We shall take 'Middle School German' to mean either the third year of a four-year German Course, or the first term and a half in the third year of a three-year Course. The remaining time in both Courses will be devoted more strictly to revision and to

immediate preparation for the Examination. We advise strongly against a two-year Course for the second language; pupils may succeed in the First Examination, but certainly at the cost of learning almost nothing of the life of the language and the country: they will thus lose what is often the most permanent benefit derived from language study.

Plurals

Hitherto Plurals have been learned more or less as vocabulary, only the main rules having been stated. But there are so many apparent exceptions that a great number of teachers, thinking some kind of systematization essential by the beginning of the third year, teach lists of plurals. This procedure is sound, provided that the pupils are already familiar with the vast majority of the words, that it is not hoped to teach plurals merely by means of the lists, and that these are kept within a reasonable compass. It is all but useless, for instance, to learn specifically all the odd plurals ('Mineralien,' 'Firmen,' 'Studien') and perhaps even lists of those words with double plurals, since many of these are far from common. The general lists that we suggest may lack the detail that pleases the grammarian; but they will at least give a sound framework on which the detail can later hang, and it is quite certain that without this framework the detail can barely be learned at all.

Masculine :—

- (1) Usually add 'e' and modify: der Baum, die Bäume; der Sohn, die Söhne.
- (2) The following add 'e' but do not modify: der Arm, die Arme; der Hund, die Hunde, etc.
- (3) Those ending in '-el,' '-en' and '-er' do not add 'e' but modify: der Vater, die Väter; der Flügel, die Flügel.

The following ending in '-el,' '-en' and '-er,' however, do not modify : der Kasten, die Kasten; der Knochen, die Knochen, etc.

- (4) 'Masculine Males' and many words from the French stressed on the last syllable are declined weak and take the plural in '-en.'

We suggest that the following categories be mentioned only if met with in the course of the reading during the year : (i) nouns strong in the singular and weak in the plural (der Doktor, etc.); (ii) nouns declined as though the nominative singular ended in '-en' (der Buchstabe, etc.); (iii) nouns like 'der Fels' and 'der Herr.'

Feminine :—

- (1) Usually take '-en' : die Frau, die Frauen; die Ente, die Enten. It may be necessary to add that feminines in '-in' double the 'n' in the plural : die Heldin, die Heldinnen.
- (2) 'Mutter' and 'Tochter' modify and take no ending.
- (3) The following modify and add '-e' : die Axt, die Äxte; die Faust, die Fäuste, etc.

Neuter :—

- (1) Usually modify and add '-er' : das Buch, die Bücher; das Volk, die Völker.
- (2) The following take '-e' and do not modify : das Bein, die Beine; das Boot, die Boote, etc.
- (3) Those ending in '-el,' '-en' and '-er' take no ending : das Mädchen, die Mädchen; das Messer, die Messer, etc.
- (4) The following are strong in the singular and take '-en' in the plural : das Auge, die Augen; das Bett, die Betten, etc.

For the rest it is best only to mention that many foreign

words take 's' (das Hotel, die Hotels), and that nouns in '-mann' usually take their plurals in '-leute.' Even this pruned list may appear burdensome : some teachers would still prefer to teach plurals as vocabulary. Once again we insist that learning from lists is useful only if the words are common, and therefore widely used in class routine. Rare plurals, if learned at this stage, are a permanent source of confusion.

Strong Verbs

The same principles apply to the learning of strong verbs : it is probably useless to learn them in the six or seven categories. An alphabetical list has the advantage that words are easily looked up; further, the verbs are more likely to be really learned, for, if they are hidden in a mass of similar verbs, they tend not to be remembered. Again, it is advisable to give only the words used in class and to avoid all that are rare. Certainly it is difficult to prune these verb lists; very many, however, can be omitted, and it is better to do too little than too much.

Subjunctive

The amount of information to be given on the subjunctive depends largely on the quality of the class. Some teachers would prefer to omit it entirely for the first three years and take the risk in the First Examination. Again, the teacher is in the difficult position of deciding which rules he will consider accurate, since the Germans themselves vary so much in applying them. It is perhaps best for each teacher to have a set of rules on the subjunctive that are rigid and always applied. Later on, in the Sixth, the pupils may realize that these dogmatic demands are only partly exact, but by that time they will be learning curious facts also about the French subjunctive. Perhaps the following uses may be taught before the Sixth Form stage :—

- (1) The imperfect subjunctive is often used for the conditional :—
 Ich wäre=ich würde sein.
 Sie hätten gesagt=sie würden gesagt haben.
- (2) There is always a subjunctive after 'wenn' (=if) in the imperfect and pluperfect :—
 Wenn er mit uns wäre.
 Wenn sie gesprochen hätte.
- (3) There is always a subjunctive after 'als ob' :—
 Er benahm sich, als ob er krank wäre.
- (4) (a) In indirect speech, the verb is in the subjunctive :—
 Man sagt, dass er krank sei.
 (b) The subjunctive is used in the tense in which the verb was used in direct speech :—
 Er sagte, dass sie es getan habe.
 He said : 'Sie hat es getan.'
 (c) In indirect speech, 'dass' is frequently omitted:—
 Man sagt, er sei krank.

This limited list, we think, is surely long enough : at this stage it is most inadvisable to deal with those complicated subjunctives expressing doubt and possibility :—

Er hätte gehen können.

Sie hätten spielen sollen.

An ordinary Reader, of Course, will contain subjunctives that the Grammar course does not cover. If a boy is intelligent enough to notice this, he will probably be clever enough to understand the explanation given privately. If it is unnoticed, the teacher may be spared a trying half-hour.

Passive Voice

The German passive is fairly easy to learn in the present, imperfect and future tenses, and it usual to leave further tenses until pupils have had more experience in the

language. Yet even if these early tenses have been thoroughly mastered, the perfect and the future perfect (if, indeed, this latter is taught before the Sixth Form) are a source of unending trouble.

The perfect passive should be approached by stages :—

Er ist geworden.	He has become.
Er ist alt geworden.	He has become old.
Er ist getötet (geworden).	He has become killed.
Er ist getötet WORDEN.	He has been killed.

We suggest that the future perfect should be entirely omitted. For the rest, it may be necessary to have specimen sentences of all tenses learned by heart; in addition, the learning by heart of paradigms may be advisable.

Supplementary Activities

The shorter time at the disposal of the teacher makes it difficult to read as widely as in French but, by the end of the second year of German, much can be done in the way of supplementary activities. Correspondence with Swiss and German schools can bring a real interest to the learning of German. The reading of illustrated periodicals (or at the very least of the captions) can provide both a welcome break in everyday learning and very useful practice in the use of a dictionary. In some publications for school pupils, such as the *Young World*, a dictionary will enable much more than the captions to be read. Songs are a constant source of pleasure and profit—far more so than in French—and they can make the end of term very acceptable to both teacher and pupil.

(3) SPANISH IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

For many pupils this is the most difficult stage : progress appears to slacken, interest is likely to flag. The language is no longer the new and amusing subject of strange sounds, simple classroom talk, easy little stories and songs which

keep up the enthusiasm of the beginner. It becomes more like hard work, it requires greater mental effort, and the necessary repetition is no longer accepted with the same keen relish.

These unavoidable difficulties are increased by the poverty of available books. For early beginners and for seniors there is a fair selection of texts, but there are not nearly enough texts suitable for Middle Forms. This applies particularly to readers, and there is a great need for simplified adaptations of real Spanish texts, and for selections of up-to-date short stories, specially written for school use and preferably dealing with Spanish life. All these readers should use a vocabulary truly suited to children of about 14 years of age whose learning time is about five hours a week. Some existing readers, in their vocabulary and idiom, are quite beyond the compass of a child of 14 years; in fact, some of the texts styled 'for beginners,' 'elementary,' etc., are intended for adults and at the earliest are suitable only for Sixth Form beginners.

Extension of vocabulary must be based largely on the reader, and if we are to maintain our early aim of developing ability and fondness of reading two things are essential: the matter must be interesting to young people, and the style must be easy enough to be understood without that constant vocabulary searching which kills interest and turns the reader into a mere translation book. It must be easy enough to allow a steadily increasing pace, for extensive reading will advance our aim better than intensive reading. It should usually in the first instance be silent reading—a different approach from that of mere 'preparation'—reading to learn new facts with preferably few unknown words, which latter will be more readily assimilated than large numbers transferred into the notebook from every page.

Pupils can then be encouraged to read and think the

story without translating. If this has been done satisfactorily, several types of oral exercises can be made brisk and lively and will give a quick test of comprehension. (It is at all times important to maintain alertness and speed in oral exercises.) Then the piece can be read aloud, and it is a good practice to follow this frequently with a dictation from what has been read. Oral translation in class should be done only to clear up difficulties and then, as a rule, it is best for the teacher to do it himself. If he has to do much of it the text is too difficult. One correspondent suggests a quick method of testing preparation of the reader: sometimes the class is questioned in English, when, if a satisfactory knowledge is shown, the teacher proceeds with reading aloud. Grammatical dissection of the reader, usually unpopular with average pupils, should be limited to what is necessary to help comprehension. Much experience of the structure of the language, of word order, for example, will be gained inductively by the reading of matter that is readily understood.

Grammar—apart perhaps from drill in the verb tenses and the pronoun groups, which need constant and cumulative repetition—should still be kept to the essentials needed to help to understand what is read and heard. The pupils' work is still largely imitation and reproduction. Sentences for translation into Spanish should be fairly close reproductions of Spanish previously read. Independent sentences or proses, if they are to be done successfully, must be preceded by full study of formal grammar: it is best to postpone them until the 'Ordinary' or School Certificate year. Some grammars, in explaining simple phenomena, use outlandish terms which repel the pupil. The word 'apocopation' will not in the least help him to use '*buen*,' when required, instead of '*bueno*.' Even if he understands the idea, he will in any case forget to use it, and many other things like it, until he has seen and

repeated them many times. 'To teach the maximum amount of grammatical fact that the class can absorb with the minimum of grammatical jargon,' as one correspondent expresses it, is a sound ideal.

No good work can be done until verb inflexions are mastered, and constant drill in these is necessary throughout the Middle School years. In tense learning, it is still best to keep to the four-word method, omitting the familiar form; but the familiar form, and the simple way in which it can be made in all but the preterite, should now be explained, and some practice be given in using it. As a rule, pupils find little difficulty with the familiar form of the verb; it is confusion of familiar and polite object pronouns which causes the real trouble.

The learning of the subjunctive tenses should be completed in the pre-certificate year (that is, in the Fourth Form). These tenses will probably have been found quite often in the reader and their use already explained. But, at this stage, translation exercises designed to make pupils use the subjunctive are premature; the rules for its use, if learned, will soon be forgotten.

Free Composition ought not to be left entirely to the year of the First Certificate ('Ordinary' level), but its scope will necessarily be limited in the Middle School. In a sense, some Free Composition is done in the form of written answers to questions; the pupil, however, does not think of these as 'Composition.' Yet Composition can be successfully developed along these lines, as answers, written consecutively and unnumbered, to a set of suitably designed questions. Elaboration of answers as skill develops produces a reasonably connected composition, which can be kept within the limits that the teacher desires in ideas and in length.

Correspondence with pupils in Spain would be an excellent incentive in the Fourth Form, when pupils may have

more time than those in the Fifth can spare for such activity. Yet it is probably difficult for many teachers to have personal contacts with Spain. A central pool, on which teachers could draw for Spanish correspondents, would be very helpful.

4. THE FIFTH FORM

In this Section, we shall discuss the work of a typical Fifth Form. It is expected that, at the close of this year, those pupils who are advanced enough and old enough will sit for their first External Examination, soon to be named the 'Examination for the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level.'

Under the new system, certain factors will modify the position that exists as we write. The proposed raising of the minimum standard for a Pass and the absence of any minimum number of subjects will probably combine to deter weaker linguists from offering our subjects. The requirement of a minimum age will keep some abler pupils from taking the examination at a time suited to their progress. Thus the teacher may have in his class a number of pupils who, for widely differing reasons, will not take the examination at the end of the year. Measures of organization to meet these difficulties are tentatively suggested in our Chapter IV. Adjustments of method of teaching will at first be largely experimental, and designed by the individual teacher to meet the particular circumstances of his class. Below we give advice suited to present circumstances, and leave future problems to future solution.

Teaching in this year is largely influenced by the examination that lies ahead, and most teachers adapt their methods to meet these requirements. There are many opinions as to what form the examination should take, and the present type of test is often criticized: yet there can be no doubt that, of teachers who prepare pupils for this

External Examination, an overwhelming majority are in favour of its retention.

The threat of examinations, of course, does not provide sufficient incentive for language study, and he would be a poor teacher who had to press that threat to make his pupils work. Nevertheless, the general view is put very concisely by one correspondent who says : 'Examinations are a help and not a hindrance. The good linguists work well anyhow, and the plodders try harder than they otherwise would.' Still, we are not here concerned with the disputed question of 'freeing our schools from the shackles of examinations,' or with the argument in favour of 'fitting the examinations to the work,' but rather with the more practical problem of fitting the work to the examination. This problem does in fact occupy much of the attention of teachers during the Fifth Year. But it certainly does not imply that they reduce their work to a process of grammar-grind and translation, teaching just enough to enable their pupils safely to negotiate the hurdles which the examiners will set before them. It means that they train their pupils at least up to a set standard in the foreign language.

To attain this goal we do not advocate any particular method. It is the personality of the teacher and the life that he puts into his own methods which count. The ideal examination would give to every candidate, by whatever methods he had been taught, a full and equal chance to show his knowledge of the language. We may still be a long way from this ideal, but, meanwhile, the present form of examination does give to the boy who 'knows his stuff' a very fair chance of showing his knowledge, and it does encourage him to work.

Oral Work

An entirely written examination could conceivably be answered with success by a pupil, or by a whole class,

whose proficiency in speaking the language was virtually negligible. A written test alone gives but a one-sided measure of command of the language : therefore, we think, an Oral Test should form an integral part of the Certificate Examination.

Teachers generally give much time and care to oral practice from the beginning, and this emphasis on speech should be fully maintained in the Fifth Year. Some find that the liveliness of oral work begins to flag in the Middle School, and with the duller classes reaches its lowest level in the Fifth. Too much striving after accuracy may cause discouragement and loss of confidence, and it may be a wiser policy to aim at a measure of fluency even at some expense of accuracy. It may be mentioned here that many teachers find at this age no detectable difference in the pronunciation of those who have been taught phonetics and those who have learned by imitation alone. Encouragement of effort rather than criticism of mistakes will help to overcome the self-consciousness and fear of ridicule which are often the cause of a tongue-tied state. Success in oral work depends largely on the infinite patience of the teacher and on the existence of a friendly atmosphere between him and his pupils.

Grammar

Most teachers agree that a thorough revision of grammar is necessary in the Fifth Year. Courses no longer satisfy requirements—even in the Middle School they often fall short of what is wanted or contain much that is not wanted—and the time has now come when grammar must be systematically studied. But opinions vary widely as to how this should be done. Some favour the use of a formal grammar text with exercises to drive home the grammatical points. Others prefer to use the grammar-book to revise and extend knowledge already partly acquired in the

previous years, to study the rules and then to apply them in prose translation and composition.

To study a lesson in grammar and then by sentences to practise the points studied can be an effective mental discipline, if well handled; but this medicine, if given in over-large doses, may become irksome and repugnant. Duller pupils are repelled by constant grammatical drill, which does not greatly increase their vocabulary, and which often only enables them to reach a fleeting measure of accuracy in rules which they soon forget to apply. If the time is spent on wider reading, the good pupils at least, with their better powers of imitation, can develop grammatical accuracy as well as vocabulary and idiom. The non-linguistic pupil, even at the age of 15 or so, cannot be stirred to appreciate grammatical niceties in his own or any foreign language; while we strive to improve his accuracy and develop his reasoning powers, we should accept the inevitable fact that his written exercises will give us much correction to do. For his examination no very profound knowledge of grammar is required, and it would mostly be misspent effort to try to make him learn it. The main problem is to make him accurate on the simple concords which he can readily understand. Probably he is already familiar with all the grammatical terminology he is likely to need; but often that is as far as he has got, and either he cannot distinguish a past participle from a past tense in English or he forgets all about it when he translates. He knows some of the facts of grammar in the foreign language, but he will not make his adjective agree with the noun and his sense of time is still undeveloped and he cannot sort out the various past tenses. 'The exam. year,' says a correspondent, 'has to be devoted to driving home grammatical knowledge that ought to have been known earlier.' The great difficulty of the weaker pupils is to remember and apply at once all the grammatical agreements which

they have learned in the foreign language and which have no existence in English. For these pupils, and they are the majority, it will be wise to keep to a minimum the learning of grammar rules as such and to make sure that this minimum is fully understood and thoroughly practised.

Most grammars need much judicious pruning to sort out the essentials which should be learned in this year. It would be unprofitable to attempt to outline what grammar might be postponed until after the Fifth Year, for it varies in the different languages. It has been suggested, for example, that in French the subjunctive mood may well be left for Sixth Form study, but a reasonable acquaintance at least with the Spanish subjunctive is needed for the first Certificate Examination. The teacher will take or discard as experience suggests, always having in mind the feeling and response of the class.

Dictation

Practice in dictation will already have formed part of the pupil's training in the earlier years, but then it was done as a prepared exercise, and the matter was familiar to him. The dictation must now be stepped up to the pattern of the external examination. The candidate must now be trained to write a dictation which is quite unprepared and possibly on a topic with which he is unfamiliar.

During the Fifth Year the approach to the examination standard must be gradual, and especially so if practice has been limited in the earlier years. Examiners say that teachers differ widely in the amount of practice in dictation which they give to their pupils, and some undoubtedly do not give enough. As an exercise, it varies greatly in difficulty in the different languages. In French it is a much more searching test than in German or Spanish. The pupil must grasp the meaning of the French, and he must know his grammar to be able to write down the dictation correctly. In

Spanish he is in the happier position of being able to write a good dictation without worrying much about the sense or the grammar so long as he has learned to spell phonetically the sounds which he hears.

While dictation is an invaluable exercise in compelling the concentration of the pupils, it can also give the teacher a good chance to test himself. The recurrence of a mistake in a number of scripts may reveal some imperfection in his own technique : the fault does not always lie with the pupil. A suitable dictation passage can also form the starting point of further useful exercises : for example, the story can be continued as a free composition.

The Reader

The teacher now begins more ambitious reading of continuous prose texts of some real literary merit. This introduces the pupil to a new language experience and to new difficulties which may develop or destroy his liking for the subject. Most careful consideration should be given to the choice of readers, and it is better to err on the side of choosing too easy a text than one which is too difficult. Nothing can be more wearisome to a pupil than to find himself plunged into a long, and to him wearisome, text, with a vocabulary largely beyond his grasp and which he laboriously transfers to his notebook. The effort to concentrate on such a text is too great, and interest will soon wane.

A well-chosen reader is undoubtedly of the greatest importance in the building up of vocabulary. Time given to helping the pupil to select the most useful vocabulary to learn, and to advising him on how to arrange it in a useful and logical order in his notebook, is time well spent. The vocabulary committed to the notebook should be mainly limited to words and phrases that will become the pupil's active vocabulary. If he makes indiscriminate lists of words as they appear in the text, many will be known

but passively or be entirely forgotten. We do not recommend the making and learning by heart of lists of words divorced from any context. Apart from lists of names of common objects, from which even a schoolboy can hardly make a howler, their value is doubtful. If the pupils do make up their own vocabulary in their notebooks, it is wise to allot some definite time to the revision of the words.

Opinions vary greatly on the best method of using the reader. One correspondent says : 'I do no close study of short passages. Extensive reading maintains interest. Boys build up an adequate vocabulary : the problem is to make them accurate.' Another says : 'I make an effort to increase vocabulary by close study of short passages. Words studied and written down are used in new contexts, oral résumés, etc.' A judicious blending of close study and extensive reading is favoured by many. A period can profitably be spent on a few lines which give material for discussion round the class and study of some grammatical points; but, on the whole, a sufficient speed should be maintained to ensure that the thread of the story is not forgotten. If the pupil loses his bearings in the narrative, his interest in the book will flag and he will be even less likely to appreciate it as a piece of literature.

In the examination, although candidates usually obtain their highest marks in the translation from the foreign language ('Version'), yet the quality of their English is often criticized. Practice in written translation into English (with insistence that it really is English) is a useful exercise which should not be overlooked. Oral translation alone, limited to the more difficult parts of the reader to make sure that the pupil understands them, does not make them fully appreciate differences in idiom, word order, etc. : many pupils so trained seem to imagine that they have to produce a quite literal translation in the examination, even if the result in English is fantastic. For early practice in

written translation, an intensive study should be made of the passage, various renderings should be discussed during the 'correction,' and, finally, a model translation should be built up from the combined efforts of the class. This English version, provided that the original is not too idiomatic, can later be used to great advantage for retranslation. The reader can also serve usefully as the basis for some reproduction exercises in the foreign language, and for free composition or *précis*: there are, however, many who would approve the extension of an outline into a composition, but would roundly condemn the condensation of a longer passage into a *précis*. If the book in use contains suitable translation exercises, much time can be saved. For the weaker linguist, such translation is a valuable step in preparation for the translation of more difficult independent prose passages which will need to be practised later.

Verse

It is very doubtful whether results attainable at this stage justify any attempt to develop an appreciation of the foreign literature through the study of verse. Some would condemn such attempts as a waste of time. The average pupil's knowledge of the language is still very limited. It is all he can do to master the vocabulary and idiom of straightforward prose which deals with subject matter within his experience. Any imaginative literature is as yet beyond his range. At his age, he is unlikely to appreciate the subtleties of poetic thought in his own language; he is far less capable of doing so in a foreign tongue.

Nevertheless he should study some verse during this year. There is no finer way of improving intonation and fluency of speech than by the recital of a suitable piece of poetry. Pupils of this age are past the stage when singing of songs and other forms of chorus work give any great

practical help of this kind. To save time in learning by heart, and to relieve the monotony of too much repetition, it is a good plan for each pupil to learn a short portion of a poem so that the recital of the whole piece can be continuous. If the piece has been studied as a whole by the class, the pupils will often take more interest in what others recite than in what others read from a text. Gramophone records of the same passages can be an invaluable help and guide in repetition; however faultless the teacher's accent, he cannot possibly repeat a poem several times with exactly the same intonation.

But translation of verse is unpopular. There are few who advocate its inclusion in the examination, and, where it is set as an alternative, very few candidates attempt it. A few linguists can translate verse with some success, because they are ready to work hard at any form of language study; but for the great majority it is an unprofitable exercise, and far more likely to kill literary appreciation than to encourage it.

Proses

Teachers are far from agreement on the value of proses before the Sixth Form stage, but the old method of working them is now everywhere condemned. The pupil whose 'prep.' was the 'next prose' and who had no guidance but his own hasty references to grammar and vocabulary, acquired merely the ability to transfer words from vocabulary to paper and exercised his intelligence as little as in the solution of a jigsaw puzzle. To work from English into indifferent French or other language is in any case likely to be an unfruitful occupation, and when it is done with the carelessness of the average schoolboy it is probably worse than useless.

It is, therefore, wise in the first place to postpone prose work as long as possible. Prepare for it by all means.

Revision of grammar, grammar sentences, retranslation of a good passage of the foreign language back into the original—all these help to lay the foundation of good prose work.

Secondly, proeses should at first be simple and unidiomatic. Most textbook proeses are too difficult. 'Well into the Sixth Form,' writes one correspondent, 'prose work should be very easy or, if hard, of the retranslation type.' Others, with whom we cannot quite agree, go so far as to suggest that, in the French Examination, dictation would more effectively test knowledge of grammatical construction. Almost until the last term of the Fifth Year, proeses used might well be based on passages studied previously; but at that stage, to give the necessary practice for the examination, it will be necessary in addition to use some independent passages of good English. Some teachers prefer to make up their own extracts, but this uses so much time in preparation that one would hesitate to recommend it generally; it does, however, enable the teacher to grade the proeses, both in vocabulary and grammar, exactly to the standard of the pupils.

Thirdly, the prose must be thoroughly prepared in class before the pupils attempt to put it on paper. 'Translation into French without adequate preparation is a waste of time or worse'; or, as another correspondent says: 'I work on the principle of not allowing the class to put pen to paper until they are fairly certain to make a good translation.' Haste must be avoided. The master who is willing to discuss the tenses of the verbs for a whole lesson is not wasting his time.

Some teachers set the vocabulary of the prose previously as a 'prep.' Others talk about the English passage in the language into which it is to be translated. It is useful, if time permits, to follow the prose with a free composition based on the same passage. Many advocate a quick re-test

after the prose has been written and corrected. It remains true that the first principle of any effective method is thorough preparation in class.

Free Composition

No part of the candidate's work in the School Examination is so severely criticized as the free composition. Yet that is the one question where he is given the freest scope to show what he can say in the language. He is at liberty, with what vocabulary he has at his command, to express himself in his own way on a simple subject with which he can reasonably be expected to be familiar. In the translations there is perhaps some element of luck : a candidate may be unfortunate in not knowing a few key words or idioms. But free composition is the one section of the paper where the element of chance is as nearly as possible eliminated and where every candidate, whether taught by direct or any other method, has an equal opportunity. All that he is expected to do is to make with fair accuracy a few simple statements on some familiar theme, and yet a large majority of the candidates do this test much worse than they do the prose translation.

In reality, of course, a connected composition, unless perhaps of the simple reproduction type, is a much more difficult exercise than a continuous prose translation; it requires even more careful preparation. Some language teachers think that the art of essay writing, like the study of grammar, takes an unduly insignificant place in the English syllabus. For the rest, even our best pupils have as yet hardly approached the ideal state of thinking in the foreign language, but they are at least wise enough to know what they can translate. It is almost always the poorest linguist who is the most wildly adventurous. If he forms a mental picture of the subject at all, it is expressed in English, more difficult and idiomatic than he realizes,

and this he translates word by word with happy abandon, but with disastrous results.

The conclusion to be drawn from examiners' reports is that free composition is less thoroughly taught than translation and that some candidates would appear to have received little or no practice in it before entering the examination room. Certainly it is the most laborious form of exercise to correct. Pupils should correct their own dictation, translation, etc., in class—it is the most instructive method—but the free compositions must be corrected entirely by the teacher. To set a composition as a 'prep,' giving no guidance save that about 200 words must be written is to invite trouble for the teacher, and is worse than useless for the pupil. If the latter has no help but a dictionary, which he has never been taught to use, the result is likely to be grotesque.

The pupil should gradually be weaned from complete spoon-feeding and taught to think for himself; yet at first the most careful preparation is necessary in order to keep the ramblers within due bounds and, incidentally, to save much heavy correction. The scope of the composition, selection and arrangement of ideas, and some of the necessary vocabulary, verb tenses, etc., should be fully worked out before the pupil attempts to write.

Where the 'Set System' prevails and the work can be graded to the ability of the set, the teacher's difficulties to some extent are eased; but when, as is usually the case with German and Spanish, the form is the unit, the difficulties of teaching free composition to a large, non-homogeneous class are formidable. Many hold that the writing of answers to questions in the foreign language would be a more appropriate test for the less gifted pupil, who has no aptitude for original composition in his own or any other language, but who by oral practice has acquired some degree of self-expression. Nevertheless, with suitable

practice, moderate pupils often learn to write successfully such free compositions as are recommended in Section 4(1) of our Chapter X.

5. THE ADVANCED COURSE

In Section 4 of our Chapter X we shall discuss the External Examinations for which Sixth-Form students are or may be prepared. Here, as an essential preliminary to criticism of the examinations, we shall try to estimate the needs of the students and to suggest what the teacher can do to satisfy those needs.

It is true that the teacher's work is necessarily influenced by the examinations and that this influence, good in general, has sometimes less fortunate effects. The teacher must then make the smallest concessions which will safeguard the interests of the pupils and must press for a reform of the examinations. Our suggestions concerning Examinations will be found in Chapter X. Here we attempt, so far as may be, to define ideal courses and methods.

Types of Sixth-Form Pupil

No teacher of experience would suggest that Sixth-Form work is easy. Personal problems alone will fully exercise all that the teacher possesses of sympathy, tact, experience and skill. These years are critical in the development of the individual: emotional and intellectual traits, which hitherto have lain hidden or dormant, tend strongly to reveal and to assert themselves. Sometimes the development is unpleasant or shocking, and creates problems of the gravest difficulty. More often, and fortunately, it is of high promise; yet even so, it could easily be distorted by bungling on the part of the teacher. We must show the greatest discretion in reproof and be silent as to much that we see.

Such considerations, however, should not as a rule

greatly influence the selection of pupils for our classes. These, one might almost say, are our own children : mere common loyalty asks that we take them as they are and may be, and make the best of them.

Our classifications are usually made chiefly on academic grounds and are all the safer for that. Yet, even here, awkward questions arise. Some pupils have high general ability with little of special bent : such are usually guided in the choice of a course by guesses at the economic future. Others have high special talents, but otherwise make a poor showing, and so may have to offer in their examinations one or more subjects in which their capabilities are low. In any case, unless a Sixth Form is very small, it is sure to include wide ranges of ability and endeavour, yet staffing problems may force such disparate ambitions and abilities into a single class.

For our present purpose, we can reasonably ask that each pupil has reached at least the standard of the examination at the 'Ordinary' level (School Certificate), for, at any lower standard, it would be foolish to start any Advanced Course that deserved the name.

Among those whom we reckon fit to start such a course great individual variations make classification extremely difficult, and what we now suggest is likely to be drastically revised in the light of later experience. But, provisionally, it seems to us that our pupils, actual and potential, may be classed as of 'academic' or of 'practical' types. The 'academic' type we define as possessing, or likely to develop, an appreciation of literary artistry. The 'practical' type of student may achieve linguistic efficiency, but is unlikely to do or to understand much more.

Far too often the teacher has to struggle with a class containing pupils of both types and perhaps having one or two truly brilliant pupils. This mixing may be unavoidable in small schools or even in large schools where few study

the language concerned. Where the class is very small, say of two, three or four students, the problems which arise are usually capable of solution, and the advantages of class co-operation probably outweigh the difficulties. Where a class is larger, having six to ten or more students, a wide range of ability gravely prejudices the interests of all and especially of the most able. The teacher is forced to talk, now to this group, now to that; he must accept highly divergent standards of performance; even the syllabus itself may not be the same for all. If the teacher does well under such circumstances, it is at a cost to himself which he ought not to bear. We strongly recommend that in such cases there should be two classes, each following its own course, and that the necessary staff should be made available. In later years it may be practicable to recommend still further subdivision.

Only the 'academic' student is truly fitted to follow the course for the examination at the Advanced level (Principal Subject, H.S.C.). It is true that some others succeed in the examination, but, in our view, they would do still better if they followed a different course. What that course should be we discuss later; we proceed now to consider the needs of the 'academic' student.

The 'Academic' Student

To such a one the Advanced Course is a time of golden opportunity. While he can by no means afford to neglect his basic linguistics, yet at least something of the long work of grammatical building has been accomplished. The doors of literary delight, and of social understanding, are unlocked and will soon begin to open. His intelligence approaches maturity, while his increased school responsibilities, and perhaps his successes in non-scholastic activities, stimulate his self-reliance and initiative. The question of his future rewards probably worries him but little, for,

as a rule, £500 and £1,000 a year sound much alike to him; and, in any case, it is enough for him that he is preparing for the career of his choice or pursuing knowledge and power of expression for their own sake.

Thus he can progress mightily. True, his teacher, wearied by apparent stagnation in his progress, may at times be tempted to despair; but no one who compares those who come into the Sixth Form with those who go out can doubt that in these two or three years a great work is done.

The Modern Language teacher must not suppose that all the credit for this is due to himself. There are other subjects in the Advanced Course, and there is the major advantage that during this time elements of formal and informal education, previously discrete, tend strongly to become correlated and unified. Distinct elements of experience and separate 'subjects' stretch towards each other and grow to fill the voids between.

The teacher, by illustrations from other fields of knowledge, by comparisons and contrasts, by general interest in the student's ideas, will do what he can to encourage this synthesis. Yet it is mainly due to unconscious processes within the student, little subject to the suggestions of others. Thus the teacher must still give his main effort to the sound teaching of his own material. For most of his time he must tread the firm hard road of scholarship. Only occasionally may he stray in the pleasant lanes of personal interest.

In practice, the urgent needs of the pupils leave little time for intellectual rambling. The teacher must very greatly strengthen and extend the student's command of the language, both oral and written. This is no small demand. But further, the pupil must develop his literary understanding and learn something of value of the literature of the language; he must, in addition, acquire a useful knowledge of the history of the people, of their way of life,

their useful and fine arts, their chief contemporary problems. The field is immense, and any attempt to study thoroughly the history of the literature and the economics of the country—to name no more than these—would lead to utter breakdown: the one or two extra weekly periods probably at the teacher's disposal are all too little for such huge demands. Outside the field of bare linguistics, we must choose some specimens of high interest and great illustrative value and these we must study thoroughly.

In this selection of material, the teacher must consider, firstly, what are the abilities of his pupils and, secondly, what will interest them. Yet the teacher will often do best with what interests himself most. Certainly the Advanced Course should always include some literary study and something of social study; but the teacher should have considerable freedom in determining the proportions of the efforts to be devoted to each of these studies. We suggest that about half the time available should be given to linguistics and the rest to the study of the people and their books.

Literature

Before he enters the Sixth Form, the student should have read at least some good literary works in the language; but, when he did so, his attention was probably directed to linguistic difficulties, and it is thus best to assume that he knows nothing of the literature of the language. Already, his study of English Literature may be of some service to him. Later, it may be of great help, as may any studies of other literatures. At the moment, the student is like a child who for the first time tries to walk.

The futility of throwing him headlong into *Horace* or *Iphigenie auf Tauris* is obvious: in such works, the form, style and range of ideas are totally unfamiliar to him, and even in maturity he may like them but little. At least the

first text studied, and preferably the first two or three texts, should be of a form and style already fairly familiar or unlikely to cause great difficulty, and the works should be 'young' in the sense of dealing with emotions and ideas always with us. Selected tales from Maupassant and *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* may serve as examples in French; in German we might start with *Tonio Kroger*, and in Spanish with *La Hermana San Sulpicio*.

Linguistic comprehension of the text must precede any attempt at literary appreciation. The tyro has an imperfect grasp of grammar, he has still less command of idiom, while his vocabulary may be of less than 2,000 words. Thus the teacher, especially at first, must direct much attention to the mere language of the texts. If the inexperienced teacher is not convinced of this need, a short translation test on matter which the students have prepared unaided will give the necessary demonstration.

Time will not let the teacher study the whole work intensively in class, nor would such a procedure be educationally desirable. Probably the best procedure is to select certain highly characteristic or interesting passages, to study those carefully, and then to use them to demonstrate some of the author's literary qualities. For example, in *L'Aventure de Walter Schnaffs* by Maupassant, the first two pages, and later the 'supper' scene, will well repay careful study and will illustrate some of the author's qualities of style and something of his manner of story-telling.

The teacher must beware of treating the parts of the work to the exclusion of the whole. *Morceaux Choisis* are certainly not enough: the students must see the work as a whole. In the case of a short story, as soon as the pupils have finished reading it, a lesson may be given in which, first, a few searching linguistic questions are asked, and then other questions in the foreign language directed to the subject-matter of the work, the incidents of the story.

In the case of a play, it is usually better to choose for this purpose an important Scene rather than an Act, which, by multiplicity of scenes, may confuse the pupils.

Such a lesson gives useful practice in conversation, serves admirably to check the care with which the reading has been done, and leads towards true literary interest. It is in seeking the last aim that the beginning is most difficult. Novice students will often be found extremely reluctant to offer any literary observations. 'Monsieur Jones, trouvez-vous intéressante la Scène où le baron présente Perdican à Camille?' 'Oui, monsieur.' 'Pourquoi vous intéresse-t-elle?' (*Un long silence.*) 'Je ne sais pas, monsieur.'

Many causes contribute to this failure to respond: the chief is that literary criticism is always difficult, and more especially so to the novice. Thus, in the earlier stages of literary study, the question of appreciation should be approached with great care and must not be pushed far: 'Comment Camille reçoit-elle Perdican? Se trouve-t-il offensé? Comment le savez-vous? Auriez-vous agi comme lui?'

It is, in fact, best, in the case of the first books studied, to postpone until a much later stage a great deal of the work of literary estimation, of biographical study and of literary history. Short talks, chiefly of explanation, but including perhaps some biographical facts and sidelights on 'literary background' are often useful, but the teacher must beware of encouraging his class to give back to him his own opinions learned by rote. Thus any questions, oral or written, asked of the pupils, must be carefully framed so that they can answer them of their own knowledge.

The question arises whether talks by the teacher should be in the foreign language. On the one hand, the pupil must practise the understanding of the language; on the other, the student must understand what is said. We unhesitatingly recommend that the Modern Language should be

used, but that, where necessary, the teacher should add in English a brief explanation of any puzzling point or a summary of what he has said. The pupils must be encouraged to ask for a repetition or explanation when they are in doubt.

The making of notes by the pupils is a valuable aid to learning, fosters a skill of much service in after life, and helps towards mastery of the language in which the notes are written. Generally, students should take notes in the language which they are hearing or reading at the time. The teacher should exercise some supervision : notes in the foreign language should always be inspected; the teacher should sometimes read those in English.

As the students progress from one text to another, they will acquire more and more of understanding, literary and linguistic, and less and less of English will be necessary. The range of questioning, oral and written, should be progressively extended. The following questions on *Maria Chapdelaine*, for answer in writing, are in ascending order of difficulty :—

- (1) Décrivez la maison où demeurerait Maria.
- (2) Racontez brièvement le trajet de l'église à la ferme.
- (3) Traitez le caractère de Maria.
- (4) Comment Hémon parle-t-il de la nature?
- (5) Trouvez-vous de l'ironie dans le livre?
- (6) Hémon nous enseigne-t-il une moralité?

Such a question as our third should not be set early in the course, while the last three should be reserved for the Second Year.

Some would say that all literary essays should be written in the foreign tongue, and certainly some must be so written. But we must not underestimate the difficulty which our students will experience in writing such essays : most of them will be quite unable to deal adequately even with a simple subject in the time allotted to a single homework,

while, if more time is given, fatigue and lack of linguistic power may still prevent the full expression of what the student wishes to say. Thus, he should often be allowed untrammelled expression in English. He will usually be grateful for the opportunity !

How many texts should the pupil study in his two-year course? The question can hardly be answered with exactness, for texts vary as much in length and difficulty as do the students in ability. Clearly, we must base our demands, not on what the students ought to know, but on what they do know; and not on the time which we should like to have, but on that actually available. To overload the course is to risk disastrous overstrain, and at best to rob the students of some part of the heritage of youth rightfully theirs.

We therefore recommend that, of the type of texts now usually prescribed in the examination, no more than four or five should be studied intensively, or should be required by the syllabus. Of these, at least one, and not more than two, should date from before the 19th century; and if two such texts are chosen, at least one of them should be of a type otherwise fairly familiar to the student : *L'Avare*, for example, or a selection of the *Contes* of Voltaire. Beyond such a broad survey as might be given in a couple of lessons, no attempt should be made to treat the general history of literature; but more attention than this must, of course, be given to the literary background of the texts actually studied. Every pupil should certainly read more than we suggest, and brilliant pupils can read a great deal more, but such reading should be for general linguistic and literary development and should not be the subject of intensive study.

In the selection of texts to be studied, the tastes of the teacher should have some negative force : thus, a man who heartily dislikes poetry would be ill-advised to choose for

special study an anthology of verse. He should, however, try to compensate for this defect by including poetry in the general reading, and he must give his students proper practice in verse translation and scansion. With such reservations, the probable capacity and interest of the pupils should guide the choice. Plays have the advantage of shortness, and usually of lucidity, though such a play as *Cyrano de Bergerac* will be found to provide plenty of linguistic exercise. Novels and collections of stories (even those set as prescribed texts) vary enormously in length and difficulty : the teacher should not force *Eugénie Grandet* on a weak class. Works of history and 'belles-lettres' often fail to interest a number of the class, as do works with a strong religious bias. A good book of poetry, well presented to the class, may rouse in some pupils a valuable enthusiasm, but may leave others floundering helplessly. The teacher must try to keep within the range of taste and ability of the whole class, so that all can find interest and profit ; but where, as usually happens, he cannot do this, he must do his best for the greatest number.

It is, unfortunately, necessary to remind any inexperienced Sixth-Form teacher that books must be chosen and ordered early, or disappointment may result. Where the books are supplied by the school, the teacher has a great advantage : in a period of years he can accumulate a stock of texts, immensely useful for prescribed texts and for general reading. If the pupils buy their books, then some system of buying in those that are done with should, if possible, be devised.

The Study of People and Country

With weak or moderate pupils, such a study of literature as we have suggested will leave comparatively little time for history, sociology and geography ; perhaps one-tenth of the whole. Some will object that this time is far too little

and will wish, therefore, to give less time to literature. So far as they themselves are concerned, these teachers are quite right. But we would remind them that often the teacher is far from having an expert knowledge of history, economics, etc., and he may be temperamentally unfitted to take any great interest in such subjects. If the work of such a teacher is otherwise good, we are far from condemning him. Ideally, of course, the teacher of Modern Languages should have great love and first-rate knowledge of everything related to his subject; but, in fact, the profession has to make do with the best men that it can get, and the perfect teacher does not exist. While in some circles the view is now advanced that even literature must have direct sociological intent, there are very many good teachers who would most strongly oppose that opinion, and quite a number who would rate literature a study for our pupils more important than sociology.

It is evident that, if teachers of such subjects as history and geography would consent to teach our pupils what we want them to know, the problem would be very largely solved; but these teachers are as likely as we are to find that their own syllabus absorbs all their time; in any case, it is probable that not all our pupils take history and geography; and these other teachers are quite probably far too busy to come to our classes to give special lessons. Thus, their co-operation, extremely valuable in so far as it can be secured, is unlikely to solve the whole problem, and, as a rule, the Modern Language teacher is thrown largely upon his own resources. Unfortunately, his knowledge of the social studies is likely to be far inferior to that of his colleagues who specialize in history, geography, etc.; in that case, he should make no attempt to conceal the fact, for those of his pupils who are studying those subjects, if no others, will be speedily aware of it. The handicap must be accepted, and the difficulty faced as best it may.

Much good will be done if an 'Assistant' can give talks on such subjects: the pupils should then take notes in the foreign language and write up their material in the form of essays. In all schools, the position would be easier if a better selection of textbooks on this branch of the subject were available. Books actually prescribed in certain examinations contain grave errors of historical fact. Many of the books written by Frenchmen for the purpose are highly tendentious: thus, one book, sketching the history of France in 160 pages, deals with 1871 without mentioning 'La Commune.' Still more frequently a subtle propagandist flavour does much to destroy any value that the book might otherwise possess. Of books written in England for the purpose, those written in the foreign language often seem to aim chiefly at using as many rare words as possible, while few, whether in English or French, achieve any marked degree of interest in the script, or even any excellence in illustration: a survey of the provinces or natural regions of France, for example, is usually made about as interesting as a railway timetable. But, as a correspondent suggests, there may be more interest in an anthology of regionalist writers, such as *Les Provinces de la France* by J. R. E. Howard (Harrap, 1929).

A further complication is that history is now being made remarkably quickly, while the emphasis on various geographical factors and social problems changes with equal speed. Such a book as *La France et sa civilisation* by René Lanson and Jules Desseignet, very good in 1922, and still useful in many ways, appears comic when it deals with salaries.

In some of the best of short works more recently made available, such as *French Life and Its Problems* by H. J. Fleure, and *France* by Pierre Maillaud, a tendency to evade contemporary problems and to pass lightly over the less creditable facts of the country's story seems evident.

France and the French by E. A. Craddock gives hope that the position will soon improve.

In the above discussion, we have dealt with books on French subjects : it remains to be said that teachers of German, Spanish and Russian find even greater difficulties in the selection of material of this type.

The truth is that to write good books for our purpose is extraordinarily difficult. National and political bias, of one kind or another, is extremely hard to avoid, or even to reduce to tolerable degrees. The temptation to overload the book with details which no student can remember is well-nigh irresistible. To present the matter with interest, but without affectation of style, demands something approaching genius. Good illustrations and maps (atlases available in the school may not give the information needed) would enormously add to the cost of the book. In any event, the publication of the book, as compared with that of an edition of a tried and proven work of literature, must always be highly speculative.

In an attempt to contribute to the solution of these difficulties, we suggest that it is impossible in one small volume to deal successfully with history, geography, economics and sociology. It would be far better if a trained historian wrote a small volume on history, an expert geographer on geography, an economist on his own subject. Accuracy should then be attainable, partiality should be lessened, and interest would at least be no less likely than at present. As for sociology, the average sociologist is no more capable than the average novelist of synthesizing the life of a people, and any work that attempts the task is likely to be either jejune or highly misleading. Whatever the subject of the book, care must be taken not to hide the wood amid the trees : for example, a series of chapters describing seriatim the provinces of France can hardly be other than boring ; it would be better, after a brief general

survey, to choose three or four areas of 'dramatic' interest (e.g. Paris, Provence, the Basque Country, Brittany) and to attempt to suggest something of their very real interest. Detail should be severely pruned, so that essential facts may stand out clearly and the mind of the reader be free to form its own pictures.

While we thus wait for really satisfactory material, the teacher must make the best use of what is available, employ such aids to teaching as are at his disposal, and supplement and correct all this matter by such knowledge and experience as he may possess or acquire.

A good book or film or lecture, well adapted to the needs of the students, is better in the foreign language; poor stuff in the language may depress more than it helps.

Grammar and Idiom

The study of grammar is one which the Sixth-Form teacher can by no means afford to neglect. It is true that the student should have acquired a sound knowledge of elementary grammar: all too often he has not done so. In this connection, we must remember that in the first Certificate Examination (S.C.), a Pass with Credit is often obtained in spite of a distinct weakness in grammar. Further, it is well known that students often fail in the application of grammatical rules which they well understand, and that a grammatical skill, which appears almost perfect when subjected to a fairly easy test, often breaks down disastrously when a difficult question is attempted.

Some elementary portions of grammar, especially, in French, the subjunctive, may actually have been postponed until the Advanced Course; these must now be taken. In any case, elementary grammar is not enough, and there is much of detail (exceptional feminines, plurals, irregular verbs, etc.) and of sentence construction (conditional of doubt, absolute participles, etc.) either unknown

to the pupil or barely glimpsed. The teacher, therefore, has a big work of consolidation and of extension before him.

Much of this work will obviously be done in the course of reading and of translations and proses, but, save perhaps with highly exceptional pupils, this will not suffice. We strongly recommend a weekly lesson or part-lesson devoted to the study of formal grammar, and it will often be necessary to supplement even this by two or more short intensive 'courses' of revision, which may each last for a week.

Ideally—that is, ignoring the personalities of the pupils—the first intensive revision should come at the student's first entry into the Sixth Form. But we must not forget that the novice comes to us eager to scale new heights, to develop new enthusiasms. To begin the course with a mere revision of the dullest part of what he has already done may well blunt the first fine edge of his ardour. It is thus usually better to postpone this revision for a few weeks, by which time the pupil himself is in all probability aware of the need. The teacher's judgment will tell him what further revision courses are necessary: it is often useful to give such a course a little before a 'rehearsal' examination, while it may prove desirable to give more grammatical revision following such a test.

In all this work, it is as necessary as ever that instruction in grammar should be as lucid as it can be made. This consideration should decide whether English is or is not used in the explanations. Many teachers give the actual exposition in English, relying on frequent questions in the foreign language to prevent the home tongue from dominating the proceedings. In any case, all explanation must be well supported by examples, some given by the teacher, and more by the pupils: it is usually ineffective to wait for specific points to turn up in proses, but often the next prose to be done will suggest the subject of the grammar lesson.

It is useful for the student to keep a small book of notes on the grammar lessons. He should also have a printed grammar for reference: those by Berthon, Mansion, Clarke and Murray, and Ritchie are very suitable.

Some may think that we have exaggerated the importance of grammatical teaching at this stage. To these we would reply that any of our pupils who pursues his studies without a sound grasp of the structure of the language will find himself handicapped at every turn; and that, in any case, this understanding of structure is one of our most valuable contributions to the pupil's general education.

It is hardly possible to draw an exact boundary between grammar and idiom: thus, the difference between 'penser à' and 'penser de,' and that between 'mon ancien général' and 'un général ancien,' while often considered as points of grammar, are in truth matters of idiom. From the teacher's point of view, the main distinction is that grammar lends itself to systematic treatment much more readily than idiom. All too often, an idiom presents itself as an isolated fact.

Now a series of disconnected facts is extremely hard to memorise, and, even if it is learned by heart, still the brain often refuses to provide the exact item of knowledge at the moment when it is needed. Sometimes a lesson or part lesson on groups of similar constructions, e.g. with prepositions or with words of varying uses, such as 'faire' and 'devoir,' may be of service; but most of the teaching of idiom has to be done, either by unconscious assimilation on the part of the pupil or, as opportunity offers, in reading and in both kinds of translation. Any idiomatic construction of sufficient importance which arises should at all times be immediately impressed on the minds of the pupils by oral practice; they should keep a small notebook in which gains are recorded in full quotation, and an occa-

sional 'slip-test' on the contents of the notebook is not out of place.

Continual attention to idiom is certainly necessary, for we do not want our students in later life to make errors like those of the French publishers who translated *The Stickit Minister* by 'Le Ministre Assassiné' and *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* by 'M. Britling commence à voir clair.' On the other hand, we must avoid pushing the matter to the point of pedantry. After all, a student who translates 'I sought in vain,' not by 'J'ai eu beau chercher,' but by 'J'ai cherché en vain,' has written a sentence such as an educated Frenchman might well use; and the question, 'Quel est ton nom?' occurs in Hugo's *Contemplations*. Good judgment is thus essential in marking the student's work in the foreign language. Broadly, we should accept whatever is not incorrect, but should point out to the students what we think, in view of the context, to be the aptest construction.

Prose Composition

This is a specially difficult part of the teacher's work, for the pupils are nearly always in an awkward state of transition. The university professor, taking an Honours class, has been known to choose some little book of 'Passages for Advanced Dictation in English' and, without giving preliminary help, to make the students attempt to translate these random passages. Our pupils are far from competent to meet such demands. On the other hand, they should now have got beyond the short passage constructed without literary intent for the purpose of easy rendering into the foreign tongue. For our purpose, the passages for translation should be comparatively easy, though continually advancing in difficulty, varied in subject and style, and not devoid of literary value. The selection of such material in sufficient quantity is a difficult matter for

the hard-pressed teacher : it is better to use a satisfactory collection made for the purpose, such as the series by Ritchie and Moore or that by Whitmarsh and Jukes.

The introduction to such a book need not deal with grammar considered as a whole, but may well try to help the student to avoid the commonest pitfalls in grammar and idiom. If such an introduction is given, it must not be overloaded : it must contain no more than the student can reasonably be asked to learn while the book is in use. Far too often this modest limit is greatly exceeded.

Notes on the passages should be clear, but not numerous. Our object is to lead the student to rely more and more upon himself. Thus the later passages should have few notes or none. For similar reasons, some teachers think that a vocabulary should not be provided : in that case the student must either make the effort to remember the desired word or else at least practise the difficult art of using a dictionary. Others, finding it hard to provide every pupil with a good dictionary, and remembering the weight which the student may have to carry to and from his home, would much prefer a book with a vocabulary.

In giving proses, it is best continually to vary the method. Sometimes a prose should be done as a co-operative effort of class and teacher, the students writing down the translation as it progresses; sometimes it should be done as homework, with or without preliminary discussion by the teacher; sometimes in class, the students being allowed to ask questions of the teacher; and sometimes as a formal 'test.' Such variations in practice tend to develop at all points the capacities of the pupil and to stimulate in him qualities which might otherwise lie dormant.

The student must be continually encouraged, and in need urged, to seek the best construction and the right word. At first, his efforts of this kind are likely to have but limited success. Much of tact will be needed in pointing out

faults, but, provided that offence is not given, much fun can be had from blunders, and the teacher can add to the fun by his fertility of invention. Severity, however, should visit any careless use of a dictionary.

It is essential that the pupils' efforts be very carefully marked. As he marks them, the teacher should keep watch for types of mistakes. If several make errors of the same kind, a mention in class, or a remedial part-lesson and exercise, may be the best method of correction. The teacher need not then write long explanations on the papers. A preliminary reading of the work before marking may show what needs to be so treated. As for the rest, the teacher must either write his explanations on the papers or give individual explanations in class. Either process takes time and effort, but the necessary remedies must be applied.

A good prose exercise takes much time in proportion to its length, and often, when a long passage is set, the quality of the work deteriorates sadly towards the end. Now the work poorly done has probably hindered rather than helped progress; it is therefore better to give frequent short passages than occasional long ones. A good plan is to give about 150-175 words once a week.

Teachers, of whatever subject, are not always reasonable in the amount of work which they set. If a class often does a prose homework badly, the cause may be that excessive demands are made on that night by some other teacher. Expostulation should then be attempted, but in any case it may be better to set the prose for another night in the week. Prose Composition is of critical importance and should receive special consideration whenever necessary.

Essays

Even in the Sixth Form, conscious or unconscious translation remains the chief obstacle to good Free Composition. If the pupil has good intelligence, a firm grasp of

elementary grammar and idiom, and the vocabulary needed for the subject treated, there is no doubt that he ought to write an essay almost free from grammatical error. But how far his performance falls below this standard !

The problem is extraordinarily difficult ; the habit of thinking in one's native tongue is hard to put aside, and the pupil who thinks that he has done so is often much mistaken. This will readily be seen, for example, if a subject demanding a very special vocabulary, but otherwise interesting to the pupils, is included among more reasonable choices in a test. Some of them are almost sure to choose it, and usually to run headlong to disaster.

It goes without saying that the students should be told what is desired, and what they should avoid ; but, where the defect has persisted into the Sixth Form, direct attack of this kind is unlikely to be enough. Probably the best and most durable progress can be made by approaching the problem through the pupil's oral work. If the pupil talks much in the foreign tongue, he will be more ready to write in it ; and if, for a good length of time, he has always to converse on a subject before he writes about it, many of the actual words and phrases which he needs will already be present in his mind. The temptation to think in English will be correspondingly reduced, and to that extent good habits will be encouraged.

A certain emphasis on the form of an essay will often greatly help the work. Curiously enough, even intelligent pupils have difficulty in applying to essays in a foreign language the experience which they have gained in their own. The essays of Sixth-Form novices often add to other insufficiencies an utter formlessness or indeed muddle-headedness. The teacher must then emphasize the need for a reasonable presentation of the subject-matter and the utility of a well-judged introduction and conclusion. Only

very simple subjects should be set until this hurdle has been surmounted.

Once the pupil is writing simple essays which would not disgrace a 13-year-old native of the country, true progress can begin. Nearly all pupils are eager to express themselves. This ambition, a nuisance until good foundations have been laid, afterwards provides the greatest stimulus to progress. It should be discreetly, but sincerely, encouraged.

Translation into English

Many teachers, in work before the Sixth-Form level, make little use of translation into English; some consider it an irksome intruder into true language study. Most, however, will agree that it assumes a new importance in the Advanced Course: firstly, because the student is now in a position to do it at least fairly well; secondly, because translation is in fact often necessary in social and practical affairs; and, thirdly, because its practice can now help to stimulate whatever of linguistic artistry the student may potentially possess.

Accuracy is the foundation of good translation, and its importance should continually be impressed on the students. As a rule, they will readily do their best to respond to the demand. Occasionally, a pupil will write a paraphrase, sometimes almost an original composition, instead of a translation. If such disorder arises from impertinence, it should meet with condign discouragement; but far more often the aberrations are caused by an excess of literary enthusiasm, a wish to give a 'touch of artistic verisimilitude to otherwise bald and unconvincing' matter. The teacher must then use his accustomed tact to restrain the excesses of youth.

The student must not form a habit of excessive reliance on the dictionary. Thus unseen translation should

sometimes be written under test conditions, sometimes done orally in class : the pupil is then forced to do the best he can with the knowledge which he has. On the other hand the use of the dictionary is a skill which he must acquire, and its consultation should not be excessively discouraged.

The pupil must not be allowed to content himself with mere accuracy. The importance of style and of the use of the right word must be impressed upon him now as at other times. But that is not all, for, artistically at any rate, the spirit of the whole passage is even more important than abstract verbal felicity. A 'correct' rendering of an inspired piece of verse or prose may still reduce it to a dead level of mediocrity. Translation at its highest (and we should aim at the highest) is a human as well as a linguistic art.

Verse translation, as is well known, offers very special and partially insoluble problems. How rarely are we ourselves, even after prolonged effort, capable of translating any true poetry so as to satisfy even ourselves ! Poetry has subtle harmonies which can rarely be imitated in another language, even by an author of genius : it has other values, oftentimes, which defy all analysis and all reasoned expression. As for reproducing in English the forms of foreign poetry, few indeed are the pupils who can make any success in attempting it : any effort made by individual enthusiasm should be encouraged by the teacher's interest, and perhaps by printing in the School Magazine, but only as an ornament to the work of the student, for which more serious endeavour must not be put aside.

Certainly in the early stages verse set for translation should be simple and straightforward : Lamartine rather than Baudelaire, Vigny rather than Verlaine, Coppée and Laprade rather than Mallarmé. As the class progresses, passages of less simple lyricism can be attempted, and poets of 'experimental' types—Henri Bataille, Paul Fort,

Claudel—can be discreetly sampled. During this course the greatest eccentricities are best avoided.

The teacher must not expect too much from the students in the way of literary appreciation : their linguistic equipment and their literary experience are insufficient. After a while, they will as a rule understand what the poet was attempting, but they will probably show little power of discrimination between the good and the mediocre. After all, their taste in English verse is unlikely to be impeccable; do not be surprised if they praise Lamartine's laziest lines.

Texts used in detailed and general reading will provide many passages useful for translation practice, but are unlikely to give the full variety that is desirable. They can be supplemented by passages selected by the teacher or by books of 'unseens.' Happy the teacher who has half a dozen sets of such books, not to mention a good collection of old examination papers ! For this purpose, it is far better to choose suitable passages as they are needed than to follow by rote through someone else's collection.

Oral Work

We have repeatedly mentioned the use of the spoken language as an aid to other branches of study. We now emphasize its value in its own right.

In lower forms, the immature intelligence of the pupil, and his limited knowledge, have strongly tended to confine his conversation to oft-heard phrases and to hackneyed themes. Now, in the Sixth Form, he can well hope to use the language as an instrument of self-expression. He should be continually encouraged, not only to speak correctly, but to speak his own thought.

The material which he reads will often provide the subjects of his conversational exercises. Almost unavoidably, however, the course tends to concentrate on academic

themes. To restore the balance, conversation should frequently deal with practical affairs of ordinary life. The material for such lessons should be carefully prepared by the pupils. Subjects are innumerable : house, home and garden, fauna and flora, travel, hobbies, etc. One pupil may be asked to make a little speech by way of introduction, and each should be required to contribute to the discussion. Interest is often stimulated by an element of opposition in the argument : town versus country, theatre versus cinema, the commercial versus the academic career. Six, eight or ten pupils will as a rule do better than a very small class : thus, where few Sixth-Form pupils take the subject, it may be useful to combine the First, Second and Third Years for this lesson each week.

Reading must be practised. A pupil who speaks well will almost always read well, but those whose oral expression is not so good will often improve their conversation by reading practice. Recitation is also very useful, but care must be taken to choose a passage which the student may declaim without embarrassment : it would be cruel to ask a very shy boy to recite Verlaine's 'Green' ! A play-reading gives good practice : where the pupils are tongue-tied, even the lightest of one-act farces is not necessarily to be despised.

In all oral work, great attention must be paid to the technique of speech. The student's pronunciation may already be good. If not, he must be made to raise it far above the minimum level of the first Certificate Examination. A certain amount of phonetic instruction is a great help to all students, gifted linguists or not, and will contribute something to their use of their own language. The phonetic alphabet, whether previously learned or not can now be used with more of profit and with less of inconvenience than at any previous time.

It is probable that many will enter the Sixth Form with

no grasp whatever of the intonation of the foreign language. Before this defect can be corrected, it is first necessary to convince the student that the foreign 'tune' is different from his own. Some, especially the non-musical, find this extremely hard to appreciate. Next, we must show the student exactly what are the main differences; and, finally, he must learn and practise the desired melodies. A useful notation for instruction in intonation can be obtained by drawing across the blackboard two lines to represent the upper and lower limits of the person's speaking range, and either to put dashes or to write the syllables at the appropriate levels, thus :—

			poindre,		ver	du
			à		trou-	
		mence		me		bord
	com-		à			
l'aube			j'aime		au	
Quand						lac.

If the teacher has a good musical ear, he will readily be able to detect exactly what is wrong with the intonation of the pupil and to correct it. Such acuity of hearing, however, is not to be had for the asking; should it be lacking, the services of an 'Assistant' are priceless, and visiting lecturers, broadcasting and the gramophone assume an added importance.

Needless to say, visits to the foreign country do much to improve the pupil's pronunciation and fluency and should certainly be encouraged so far as time and money permit. Holiday visits offer great advantages. A term or more of schooling in the foreign country would do still more, provided that the pupil's work in other important subjects did not suffer unduly. If a prospective linguist has at his disposal three years in the Advanced Course stage, then a fairly prolonged stay abroad will probably be to his advantage.

Dictation

This type of exercise and test remains no less valuable in the Sixth than in lower forms. Examination requirements will no doubt force the teacher to give frequent practice in dictation. Were it not so, the teacher should devote no less time and effort to the exercise, invaluable as it is for the training of the ear, the practice of grammar and orthography, and the stimulation of the pupil's general capabilities.

The passages should be compiled or chosen with very great care. The student must be made to listen without indolence, to think without bewilderment. In early Sixth-Form stages, translations of more difficult passages from collections of 'proses' for Fifth-Form students, if of fairly interesting subject-matter, may be useful with weak pupils. At any stage, striking extracts from books read by the students, and unseen passages of more or less similar scope, may be given. In all cases, specially difficult words and unfamiliar proper names should be explained before actual dictation commences. Often this is not enough, and to prevent complete collapse it is necessary to omit difficult phrases and sentences from the selected passage.

Procedure should be varied: sometimes the dictation should be given unseen, sometimes after slight or careful preparation. Unseen dictation should always be slowly read through to the pupils before writing begins, and necessary explanations should be given in the course of the reading.

During the writing, each phrase should be read once only if the passage is easy, twice if it is difficult. In neither case must phrases be overlong: seven or eight words should be a maximum. As a rule, it is best to read an unseen passage once more after the main dictation is finished, to give an opportunity for minor corrections. If copies are available, the students can well mark their own

work, but later the teacher should check the efficiency of their marking.

The dictation of notes in the foreign language is objectionable, firstly because the student should rely as little as possible on notes compiled by anyone but himself, secondly because the practice tends to encourage the slipshod taking down of dictated matter, and thirdly because much time is wasted. Of course, the teacher, if he so chooses, may use for dictation a passage of literary criticism, of historical matter, etc., but only provided that, in the dictation lesson, it is the dictation, not the content, that is stressed. For the dictation of notes in English no good word can be said : if such notes *must* be given, the cyclostyle should be used; and in that case, why not use the foreign language?

Where there is a great range of attainment within the class, the young teacher may like to try a method of dictation which others have found useful. Choose a fairly long passage hard enough for the best pupils. Start dictating to the whole class, but rather slowly, and, if necessary, smoothing out the worst difficulties. After ten lines or so let the weakest pupils stop writing and quietly correct their work from the book. Meanwhile the teacher continues to dictate at a higher speed. A little later, pause to allow any others who so wish to withdraw. The dictation is again speeded until in the end only one or two advanced pupils, proud to be the last and keyed to a great effort, are writing at full speed. These last and best pupils, who write the longest dictations, need much less time than the others to mark their work. Thus, only a few minutes after the dictation has finished, the pupils' work of marking is done.

The 'Scholarship' Student

Many local authorities have commendably increased the number of their university and similar scholarships, while the minor awards of universities and colleges are frequently

won by students who are good, but not brilliant. Thus, fortunately, a high percentage of those who are fit to proceed to a degree or the equivalent can win an award which will help them to do so.

Such awards are usually made on the basis of the results of the Higher Certificate Examination, or of another examination with the same syllabus and of difficulty little greater. Thus preparation for such scholarships generally affects but little the normal Sixth-Form Course.

When the student hopes for a University Open Scholarship, or for a State Scholarship, the problem is very different. True, the increase in the number of State Scholarships will tend to make them easier to gain. Yet the standard of the Scholarship Papers has always been far above that of the Advanced, and even so the students who work them with credit greatly exceed the present number of State Scholarships, while competition is even keener for the major Open Scholarships of Universities. Therefore, if we are to do our duty by our ablest and most ambitious students, we must give them special attention. This partial concentration of the resources of the school on those of the highest ability is thoroughly justified, for high intelligence will amply repay the 'capital outlay,' while genius, if it should appear, is priceless.

Where possible, the State and Open Scholarship candidates should form a special class, at least for the final year of schooling. If this is done, great care must guide the selection of the students. If A can beat B by 10 per cent. or more, then usually B is in no way jealous of A; but, if the gap is only of 1 per cent. or 2 per cent., B may well feel that this proves no permanent superiority in A, and may feel resentful if A has an opportunity denied to himself. But provided that the class is well chosen, it can make astonishing progress. Reading can develop in breadth and depth, linguistics in all aspects can make rapid headway,

intelligence swiftly assumes confidence and poise. Each such class will necessarily be different from every other, even of its own kind; the teacher's methods must be specially devised for those pupils. Yet after all, methods here will probably be of secondary importance. Let the teacher be of high ability and attainment, and truly alive : the pupils will do the rest.

The staffing of the school should allow the formation of such a class. Usually it does not, and the 'scholarship' pupils have to join the others. The teacher's work, if the best is to be done for all, then becomes extraordinarily difficult. He has to give to the brilliant pupils the instruction suited to their ability, without neglecting, and without appearing to neglect, the others. Still harder, he may have to make the very able listen to lessons on quite elementary matters without boring them. Some teachers achieve excellent results under such conditions : their successes are evidence of the great adaptability of the intelligent human brain, but are unavoidably less than they might have been.

Non-Specialist Students

Many Sixth-Form pupils study a Modern Language with aims lower than those which we have so far discussed. Often in the past they have explicitly prepared to offer the subject at the 'Subsidiary' Level, far below the 'Principal Subject' Level in the H.S.C. The Report of the Secondary Schools Examinations Council will lead to the disappearance of the 'Subsidiary' Papers; we much regret this step. It is true that there are other examinations for which some such pupils prepare, but these appeal only to those who wish to enter the well-defined careers served by such examinations. Other 'subsidiary' pupils, lacking the incentive of the examination, are likely sometimes to do worse in the future than in the past. Only extremely great skill and tact in the teacher will be able to arrest such a decline.

The pupils of this group provide a bewildering variety of types. There is the able linguist, who has but recently begun an extra language; his interests are treated in our Chapter IX, 'Those Who Start Late.' For one or another reason a pupil of high general ability may have chosen to give his chief attention to subjects other than ours. The Science student, whether a good linguist or not, may do some French or German for practical reasons. A pupil of moderate ability may study a Modern Language merely because he is not quite so uninterested in this as in any other available subject. Worst of all, the pupil may vaguely wish to do something, or to pretend to do something, while searching for a post.

This last group, of pupils who do but pass their time, is educationally the least important of all, but is likely to be the most troublesome. It may well be best to make a special course for them, even if technically they remain in the same class as the others. Thus, it is often possible to find some subject within the framework of the civilization of the foreign country which has for them a special appeal. On such a subject, given a notebook and one or more works of reference, they will probably be willing to do 'research,' their work being inspected once a week by the teacher. One correspondent mentions the case of a musical boy of very little linguistic talent who wrote excellent notes on the lives of French composers. Others may be equally interested in soldiers, explorers, artists, etc. A preliminary talk with the pupil will often reveal a promising line of approach.

The remaining students are varied enough, having but two things in common: that their knowledge of literature and their oral work will be tested but little, if at all, in examinations. Time not spent in literary study can be given to practice in the written language, but the teacher will neglect oral work at his peril, for bad pronunciation

and absence of the interest of speech militate powerfully against the understanding of the written tongue. Even if the pupil requires a reader's knowledge only, still he should often practise reading aloud, and should sometimes be asked questions in the language. Anyone who wishes to write the language must acquire or maintain a satisfactory command of the spoken tongue.

Weaker pupils are apt to appreciate little of literary values, and should not be pestered with literary technicalities. None the less, what they read should be good, although easily understood in form and content. Relative simplicity need not entail puerility. We may choose a humorous story, or one of adventure, or a one-act farce, but each should be good of its kind. Further, the pupil should sometimes read some matter, including some poetry, which from the literary point of view is rather difficult to him. It is our work, not to cram, but to educate.

Students of higher ability may well be able to appreciate work of high artistry, and they should be given such work to read. Unhappily, they are likely to have far too little time in the subject fully to develop their capabilities, but it should be possible to arouse a healthy curiosity which may be of great value later on.

Where students not proceeding to the Advanced Level are taken as a separate class, the teacher can devise a language course specially to serve their needs. He must take into account the varying abilities of the pupils and must be careful not to leave the weaker vessels becalmed. Sometimes it may be possible and advisable to divide the class into two sets: more often, the class should be treated as a single set in its main work, some discrimination being made in the allotment of work for private reading.

More often than not, all these students are simply added to the 'Advanced' or 'Principal Subject' group for some of their lessons. This causes complications in the teacher's

work which he must solve as he can. Obviously, the lessons when all are present will be reserved mainly for linguistic work, but much will depend on the teacher's judgment. If school organization permits, it may sometimes be useful to give to some pupils an assignment of work and to banish them to private study.

In any case, it will almost certainly be necessary to give to the 'Non-Advanced-Level' students much practice in the fundamental grammar of the language. Rules and facts, half-learned in lower classes, and more-than-half forgotten since, must be brought once again into the open and impressed, if possible for ever, upon the student's mind. One who is weak in grammar may scrape through some examination, or stumble through some technical work, but he has certainly missed a great part of the profit which our teaching should have given him.

Future Developments

Until now, far too many of our pupils have left school without taking an Advanced Course. Those of low academic ability and those temperamentally unsuited to school life are no doubt wise to leave at 16. Indeed, their search for a suitable career may be hindered if they stay longer. There remain many who should be encouraged to continue their schooling.

Let us for the moment assume that very soon all who usefully can do so will stay at school until they reach the age of 18. We shall find some of these additional pupils quite fit to follow an existing Advanced Course. Many, however, will lack that kind of imagination which readily translates the printed word into sensations and thoughts; the mere fact that they have hitherto left school early suggests that often they will be hard to interest in book-work. To suit the needs of such pupils, a new course must be devised.

The linguistic work of such pupils must be very carefully planned. Many teachers, no doubt, will use new Language Courses written for the purpose. In the matter of all such courses, even more than in courses for other pupils, the general interest factor must be stressed and sustained: extracts, both English 'proses' and passages in the foreign language, must each constitute, or contribute to, a coherent whole, likely to attract the attention of the pupil. Good results should accrue. Potentially, almost all these pupils will be capable of reaching what we have hitherto called the 'subsidiary' standard. They will not do so, or at least they will not do their best, if we lose their interest or fail to maintain it.

Linguistic work alone, however, will often fail to awaken the desired enthusiasm; much more will be needed to give life to the study of most of these pupils. The lighter material of the library (magazines, journals, etc.) will help; still more advantage may be drawn from judicious selection from the 'Aids to Method'—Realien, dramatics, films, etc.—discussed in Chapter VI.

Yet there is danger that, amid such showy activities, true teaching may be neglected. There must be a main course of serious study, of true educational content, which will both interest the pupil and counterbalance the somewhat distracting influence of the auxiliary activities.

In this main course, abstruse literary values will be of little avail; we must search rather for clear and lively stories, plain and vivid description, important and arresting fact. Stories and articles written for the purpose are unlikely to be satisfactory: an author who can write a really good story for boys and girls will not, as a rule, publish it as a school-book. Good books written for young people in the foreign country will be rare; they may be supplemented by other foreign work, not specially written for the young, but within the limits of their imagination.

The writing of the selected work must be straightforward; the subject-matter exciting without cheap sensation, or at least having a ready appeal to visual imagination; the whole as well illustrated as possible. The original work is likely to have excessive linguistic difficulty and to demand judicious emendation.

Few educational publishers have as yet given anything really suitable for our present purpose. Some teachers may like *Les Provinces de la France* by Howard (Harrap); *Contes et Saynètes* by Colin (Ginn); *Four Contemporary One-Act Plays*, edited by Fite (Heath); *French Plays for Boys* (Nelson); and a few others. But these are hardly ideal, and serve rather as signposts to indicate the direction that progress should take.

Works such as we demand will not be easy to compile and to publish, but the need must be supplied. If our Grammar and other Secondary Schools are to do their full duty to the community, many more pupils must complete an Advanced Course: yet if, keeping them at school, we offer them unsuitable material and ask of them the wrong things, then our last state will be worse than the first. The problem is urgent and unsolved. It cannot be put aside.

6. THE USE OF DICTIONARIES

Every teacher knows what 'howlers' a pupil can produce when he gets hold of a dictionary, and opinions vary as to when he should be allowed to use one. Some hold that it is unwise to give dictionaries to pupils below the Sixth Form; even in the Sixth they would as far as possible discourage their use, because pupils use them so badly. But adults, untrained in the handling of such a double-edged tool as a bi-lingual dictionary, can fall into the same traps as any inexperienced youth. The foreign gentleman, who used his pocket dictionary in a London shop and asked for

twins when he wanted a pair of cuff-links, made just the sort of mistake that every schoolboy makes; and the Englishman who mistranslated 'replace red material by blue' as 'substitute red material for blue' in an order from South America learned to his cost how dangerous it was to trust in his ability to use a dictionary.

For the unwary who unthinkingly accept what the dictionary says, there are, in fact, many pitfalls. It is therefore very important that every pupil should have some instruction in the proper use of the one book which he is bound to need as his study of a language advances, and which may be his main aid in any language work after he has left school. Many forms of exercise can be devised which will help the pupil to realize that, when he finds several French translations of the English word that he looks up, they are not all exact synonyms from which he may pick his fancy.

As a rule textbooks for Junior and Middle School work contain vocabularies which satisfy the normal requirements of the class; some teachers think that texts for Fifth Form use should also contain good vocabularies. Yet even among young beginners many show a strong desire to possess their own cherished dictionaries, which often they prefer to use instead of their vocabularies. Some think it better to encourage a pupil to use any book in the language, even at the expense of some mistakes, rather than to damp his enthusiasm. In any case, not much harm can be done when the bulk of his written work consists of translations and the various other forms of exercises found in a course or reader. In reality, the danger only arises when, without sufficient guidance, the pupil uses a dictionary to write a free composition. He is then in far greater danger of going beyond his reach: if his subject is 'A Journey by Train,' he is likely to think of such phrases as 'the train pulled out' and 'to pick up speed,' and to

translate them by the mere process of turning up the words in the dictionary.

Generally, the dictionary should be used for reference only, and at first it should be used solely to find English equivalents of foreign words. Foreign illustrated papers can provide a useful hunting-ground for practice. At a later stage, exercises of the 'missing word' type will give good training in choosing the right foreign word from the dictionary. Sixth Form pupils, in much of their work, will need a good bi-lingual dictionary; if they are to know how to use it intelligently, they should not be left to learn for themselves by trial and error only. Such pupils should also have available for reference illustrated encyclopaedic dictionaries entirely in the foreign language.

In the present type of External Examination, the candidate works in conditions which no doubt he feels to be exceptional. He is completely debarred from using works of reference to which in normal circumstances he would have access. Apart from other things, the language paper is a test of the extent of the candidate's vocabulary; in that respect it is largely a test of memory, not of ability to use available material. There is something to be said for a form of examination in which the use of a standard dictionary would be allowed, just as logarithmic tables are supplied for use in certain mathematics papers. The essential vocabulary test could still be satisfied if the paper were in two parts. The first part would be done without dictionaries, and the answers would be collected at the end of the allotted time: this part would prevent excessive reliance on the dictionary rather than on memory. The second part, which could be shorter and much harder, would then be worked with the help of a dictionary. The good candidate would probably have an advantage over the poorer one even greater than in the first part of the paper: the latter's frequent recourse to the dictionary would prevent

his completing the paper. The second part of the paper, in addition to being of a higher standard, would test a form of skill which is well worth fostering.

7. MODERN LANGUAGE LIBRARIES

The Modern Language Department should certainly have its own library books. These will range from easy, well illustrated short stories and plays for juniors, through harder readers for the Middle School, to a library for seniors comprising works of reference, dictionaries, standard authors, recent and even contemporary novels, and anthologies of modern prose and verse. At certain times the pupils should have access to a variety of matter for incidental reading: guide books, background pictorial numbers of the *Encyclopédie par l'Image* type, and attractive periodicals (when grants allow) such as *L'Illustration* and *Le Monde Illustré*; any available *Illustrierte Zeitung*; or any Spanish or South American review such as *Caras y Caretas*, *Para Ti* and *Blanco y Negro*. Such magazines should be kept in stiff covers.

The decision where to house such a variety of printed matter must take into account both school organization and the average pupil's convenience. When the department's main stocks are kept in the School Library, the School Librarian can be a very helpful colleague in allotting shelves or bays, and, where necessary, in fairly apportioning the annual book grant. The range of the more advanced books will determine whether the entire senior library or only a term's supply of books should be kept in the Sixth Form room. Accessibility, however, does not connote maximum use, for few books will recommend themselves. Thus many teachers keep in the subject room a small selection of books or carry round a few for distribution when occasion offers. Similarly, in our age of superficial reading, pupils must be encouraged to delve into a

newspaper or book of historical interest and not merely to skim its pages.

Whilst a keen senior pupil may need little more than direction, the young beginner must be nursed or watched lest his first borrowing enthusiasm wane to ineffectiveness. Reading matter, offered by a master attending the library, should be easier than that taken in class, and its content of useful words and idioms, preferably in dialogue, should help the learner to catch the spirit of the spoken language. The careful choice and recommendation of a few suitable texts—not merely old inspection copies—is important, since, though we may begin by getting the pupil to read almost anything that catches his fancy, the purpose of the library should be to foster the interests of particular pupils, the best of whom become students.

Rules for borrowers need only be few, and the classification of the books should be of the simplest. This excludes the Dewey system, which is not intended for the very small library, and which might handicap a Librarian who desires to set out his books attractively and in groups whose range can readily be understood by pupils. Some system of letters and numbers, such as the Cheltenham, for books and card index, is more readily applied and requires no key. But the young reader himself will usually be glad to have help, or at least friendly approval of his own choice of book. The reading becomes his affair and the borrowing period may be generously long. The best private reading will be voluntary and will not be rigorously tested. Rather should opportunity be given to the pupil to express himself frankly. Reading done in a library period can readily be tested by questions on comprehension, vocabulary and even construction. Pupils can do valuable work by making their own vocabularies and learning them systematically. Sixth Forms, of course, can be set a definite task. One correspondent reports that even his Science Subsidiary

H.S.C. candidates have regularly written a good terminal essay on a book worth reading.

We accept the young pupil's hedonistic expectation and offer when we can an attractive book, supplied with illustrations and vocabulary, preferably well printed and not too thin. In a catholic selection of books there will doubtless be found the thriller and the broadly comic story, but not matter that is drivel or sordid. The Librarian will rightly draw on books of the old Larousse *Livres Roses* type and even on a series like that issued by Hachette with crudish Walt Disney-like illustrations, and, too, on several of the much praised Rapid Reading stories, taking care to exclude one or two marked by an unwholesome macabre flavour. A perusal of catalogues will remind him that the best of Dumas, Victor Hugo and Mérimée, plus well-chosen Maupassant, are as good as the Word Count series, but editions must contain their own vocabularies.

When the lending library is accommodated in the School Library, it is an obvious advantage to have uniformity of system, e.g. for cards kept inside the book pending removal on borrowing to an index box, and for members' loan cards. Of the latter, second and even third cards marked for convenience 'Non-Fiction' may be issued and made valid for Modern Language books. The Sixth should be urged to consult a displayed or handy catalogue with such headings as Literature, subdivided into epochs and genres (prose, verse, plays, monographs); Civilization (usually in English), and Recent and General Books. Juniors are more attracted by a special display or list of a few books changed at frequent intervals. Some periodicals and newspapers can be given a string loop for hanging on hooks: this at least prevents the stacking of unread printed matter.

The problem of getting paper-backed books bound confronts every Modern Language Librarian. One corres-

pondent reports that in his school it has been solved with the help of a voluntary bookbinding class, but the colleague in charge of this class claims that such work might well be done in school time, one period per week to be given by one form that would take Bookbinding as part of the Art or Handicraft syllabus. The cost of the necessary apparatus is moderate, and plain materials are not expensive. At least simple case-binding could soon be learned, and pupils and the school would benefit.

Some correspondents affirm that private reading has declined to the half of the pre-war habit. Even *La France* or the like bought weekly by the pupil is read only in parts. This prompts the cry: 'Get them to read something! Discrimination will follow.' From *L'Équipe*, an all-sport paper, the boy may turn to the pages of a more literary journal. More than one middle-aged teacher regretfully recalls an arrangement formerly made with a French friend or newsagent who sent him a different daily newspaper every day, so that the complete range covered the daily press. Nowadays a range of periodicals such as *Paru* (with book reviews), *Conferencia*, *Freiheit*, and *L'Illustration* would offer interesting variety, but, until the importer's charges have been reduced, the cost of such a good supply may be thought too high. For post-war documentation the Reports of the British Element of the Control Commission for Germany can be obtained, and one might mention scientific journals such as *Science et Vie*, which fill gaps in the inadequate range of books available for science students, and may retain the waning attention of students at this level. *France* at 6d. and, in London, several Paris newspapers at 3d. will be considered good value, the former for the serious reader, the latter for the pupil who will hardly read articles, but pores over small items of news and, most profitably, advertisements. Even the incidental can be turned to good account.

CHAPTER VI

TEACHING AIDS AND FOREIGN CONTACTS

INTRODUCTION

IN this mechanized age it is only natural that aids and devices to assist the teacher should appear in the fore-front of educational progress. Attention has been focused on this subject by the great advance made by audio-visual aids since the outbreak of the war, and by the great popularity enjoyed by these media in instructional work in the Army, Navy and Air Force. It must not be forgotten, however, that teachers of Modern Languages have for many years employed in their classrooms such devices as the gramophone and the radio, and it would be regrettable if such teachers did not participate fully in new developments.

It is possible to take widely differing views of the purpose and the use of these teaching aids. Some, regarding such aids quite frankly as mere window-dressing, would in consequence dismiss them with contempt. Others see in the use of these aids the application of sound psychological principles. Many, carried away by the fashionable trend of the moment, are in great danger of asking too much of the new media, to which, consequently, they would accord an altogether disproportionate place in the classroom. It is beyond doubt, however, that these aids, when employed with discretion and discrimination, succeed in the important purpose of stimulating the interest of the pupil; furthermore, many of these devices have an instructional value of their own.

It is possible to compile quite an impressive list of aids to Modern Language teaching, some new, some almost old. It must, however, never be forgotten that these devices

are merely *aids*, supplementing the work of the teacher : they can never, in any sense, be regarded as a substitute for the teacher.

In no wise do these aids lessen the responsibility of the teacher ; on the contrary, their use imposes new responsibilities upon, and makes new demands of, the teacher. Each device has its own special advantages and disadvantages, its own special use in the general scheme, and it is for the teacher to be aware of these capacities and of these limitations. The particular device that must be employed at any moment to achieve a particular purpose must be decided by the teacher in the light of his knowledge and of his experience. Nothing can replace the teacher, who alone knows the pupils and their peculiarities, their special requirements and the stage of knowledge that they have already attained.

The general purpose of the special aids to be considered is to help the teacher to do more effectively certain parts of the work, which otherwise would be performed either less effectively or less economically. Much will depend on the relative importance that is attached to the specific parts of the work which such aids are intended to serve. A due sense of proportion is essential. These aids must never be regarded in any way as an end in themselves : they are only the means to an end. Moreover, a very critical attitude ought to be maintained with regard to such aids as are produced 'externally' to the schools. The teacher can never be a mere link in the chain of some process of mass-production. Such aids as are employed in the classroom should be intimately connected with the instruction ; in fact, they should be bound up with this instruction, of which they should form an integral part.

Teaching aids should never be looked upon as a substitute for hard work ; they should never be employed in such a way as to detract from the disciplinary aspect of lan-

guage study. Regarded in the light of servants, and not masters, they sustain and enliven the more technical side of learning, and the time devoted to their use ought to be amply repaid in increased interest and zeal for study. The purposes that can be achieved by a judicious use of these teaching aids are indeed numerous. They will help to keep the instruction linked with real life and the outside world, and this sense of reality will tend to dissipate the feeling that the language studied is no more than a classroom subject. The result here should be the stimulation of interest. An aid can readily provide an alternative method of attack and lessen failure. Certain aids offer the possibility of unlimited repetition—a most important factor in successful language teaching. Other aids will assist with the recognition and production of sounds and the learning of intonation. Cultural interests can also be served, and the pupils can be given a good insight into the life of the foreign country.

TEACHING AIDS

I. CLASSROOM EQUIPMENT

A certain amount of atmosphere can be created by suitable equipment and furnishing of the classroom. A wall-map of the foreign country will prove most useful, and opportunity should be taken to exhibit such pictures, posters and diagrams as may be available. It is a mistake, however, to look upon these exhibits as in any way permanent, and a strict time limit should be imposed upon their use: they ought, then, either to be replaced or to disappear.

It is amazing how odd souvenirs brought back from abroad can prove of absorbing interest to young pupils. Here the possibilities are endless: railway and bus tickets, programmes, bills from restaurants and shops, catalogues.

Such objects should be available for use at the right moment. The foreign pen-friends of the pupils can prove most helpful in the provision of these and other similar articles. Tourist agencies and foreign railways can supply posters (many of real artistic merit), brochures and maps.

Many teachers find ample repayment for the trouble of mounting and displaying such items as these :—

- (a) Newspaper headings.
- (b) Views of places and historical buildings such as the Châteaux de la Loire.
- (c) Portraits of famous men and women.
- (d) Illustrated advertisements in great variety.
- (e) 'Quiz' wall cards.
- (f) Specimens of foreign handwriting and letters with, perhaps, short comments.
- (g) A poster entitled, for instance, 'En Route pour la France,' showing a passport, the rate of exchange column from the daily newspaper, railway and other practical information.

II. OPTICAL AIDS

The relevant types are the following :—

- (a) *The Lantern (or Diascope)* : Easy to operate; a good instrument can readily be used in a partially darkened room. Suitable for large audiences, but for classroom purposes is now being replaced by the film-strip projector. Moreover, lantern slides are expensive, bulky and very fragile.
- (b) *The Episcope* : Used for the projection of illustrations and photographs, but it is essential that the room be efficiently darkened. Good models are expensive, but a small instrument can be constructed if a suitable lens can be obtained.
- (c) *The Epidiascope* : A combination of the lantern and episcope, the change from one type of projection to

the other being effected by means of a lever.

- (d) *The Film-Strip Projector* : A miniature lantern designed to project pictures on a strip of standard (35 mm.) film. Such pictures, which are comparatively cheap to produce, have none of the disadvantages of lantern slides. The film-strip projector, although not suitable for large audiences, is ideal for classroom work.
- (e) *The Film Projector (silent)* : There is undoubtedly a place still in education for the silent film, even in the Modern Language classroom, and many teachers prefer to supply their own commentary. It must, however, never be forgotten that sound films are not to be projected on a silent instrument.

(For further technical details regarding all the above 'aids' consult *The Teaching of Science in Secondary Schools*, compiled by a joint committee of the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters and the Science Masters' Association. Optical aids are treated in a section of Chapter VIII, written with the co-operation of the Education Committee of the Scientific Film Association.)

All the above optical aids achieve a similar result by the use of slightly different means. The throwing of pictures on a screen permits the addition of the visual appeal to the auditory appeal. By the kindling of the imagination and the quickening of the interest of the pupils an undoubted stimulus is given to the processes of learning. (A similar effect is attained by the addition of satisfactory illustrations to the textbook or the reader.)

The optical aids now being considered are all comparatively easy to operate, and their use, in suitable circumstances, should not be neglected. In the Middle School, views projected on a screen may readily be made the basis of conversation : pupils might, for instance, be encouraged to bring along their own snapshots to describe and discuss.

The sections of the textbook or reader dealing with the foreign country and the life of its people can easily be illustrated by views, and a collection of postcards and slides should be compiled with this object. Cartoons and portraits should be included; in fact, the possibilities are endless.

Lantern slides dealing with the various countries are obtainable from many sources.

Manufacturers are now producing film strips in ever increasing numbers. One set of these, 'En Route pour Paris,' has already been issued by the School Aids Department of the *Daily Mail*; the four series are intended for use in conjunction with a reader. The Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français (179, Piccadilly, London, W.1) will supply on loan, free of charge, eleven series of film-strips, each containing between 40 and 50 pictures with explanatory titles in French, and including such subjects as: 'L'Histoire du Chemin de Fer,' 'La Journée d'une Locomotive,' 'La Renaissance du Rail.'

Film-strips dealing with France and Belgium, Germany and Austria, Spain and Portugal, and Russia have been issued by the Visual Information Service (168a, Battersea Bridge Road, London, S.W.11) and by Messrs. Newton and Co., Ltd. (43, Museum Street, London, W.C.1). The cost is about 1¼d. per picture. In many cases the film strips are accompanied by lecture notes; otherwise, explanatory notes are included on the film itself.¹

Many teachers will wish to produce film-strips from their own photographs: the process is both easy and cheap.

¹ Full information regarding these film strips is given on pp. 29-32 of the December, 1947, issue of *Modern Languages*: a Report of the Gramophone and Films Committee of the Modern Language Association.

The teacher of modern languages may also find film strips issued by other firms of assistance in his work: Dawn Trust Film Library (Aylesbury, Bucks); Common Ground, Ltd. (Sydney Place, London, S.W.7); British Instructional Films, Ltd. (Mill Green Road, Mitcham, Surrey); National Film Board of Canada (Canada House, Trafalgar Square, London, S.W.1).

An article "How to make Film Strip and Miniature Lantern Slides, using simple apparatus," by C. H. Bailey of Didsbury Training College appears on pages 22-31 of *The School Science Review*, October, 1948.

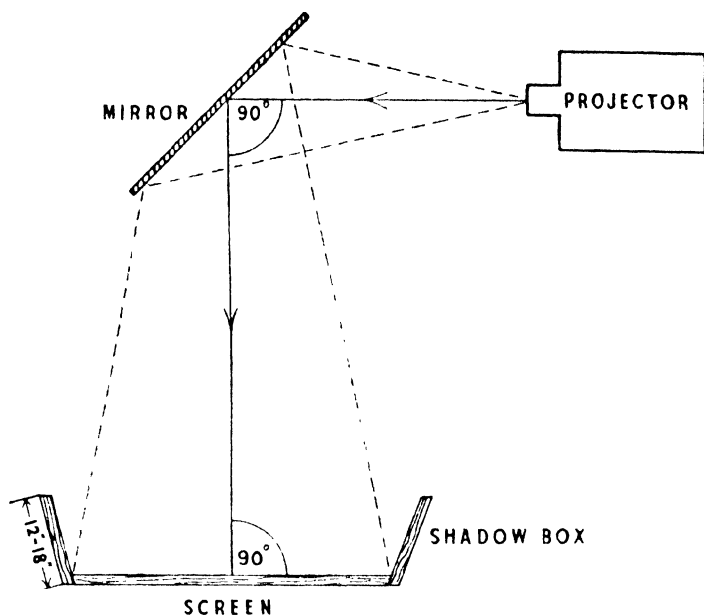
In the Upper School lectures on the topography, the art and the architecture of the foreign country are much more effective when adequately illustrated, and material suitable for this purpose is plentiful. The foreign 'Assistant' in the school should be encouraged to take full advantage of these optical aids, the usefulness of which he will certainly appreciate; let him be acquainted with the resources of the school as soon as possible after his arrival.

*Rear Projection*¹

The teacher would do well to explore the possibilities of rear projection, which offers two great advantages: (i) the teacher can remain in his usual position—in front of and facing the class; (ii) the room is not completely darkened, it being necessary with certain projection instruments merely to shade the screen from direct light. The following points should be observed:—

(1) *Screen*: The translucent material may be either ground glass or, preferably, a thin, colourless plastic sheet with a matt surface; the following have been successfully used: 'Cellastoid' (British Celanese, Ltd., Celanese House, Hanover Square, London, W.1) and 'Baxoid' (sheets 55 in. by 24 in.; B.X. Plastics, Ltd.). The substance chosen ought to have a low degree of reflectivity, and ground glass, if used, should have a clear surface on the side nearer the audience. For small audiences (not exceeding 50) ordinary Swedish greaseproof paper (sheets 30 in. by 20 in.) is not only cheap but quite effective.

¹ The section on Rear Projection is based on information furnished by: (1) The Technical Adviser to the British Film Institute, and (2) The Inquiry Bureau of the *Film User*, 19, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2.



(2) *Shadow Box* : The top and sides of the screen should be masked by fitting to the frame of the screen a shadow-box 12 or 18 in. deep.

(3) *Position of the Screen* : The worst lighted part of the room should be chosen for setting up the screen. It may be necessary to exclude extraneous light by means of curtaining.

(4) *Use of a Mirror* : With rear projection the image, as seen from the front, would be reversed; to obviate this, and also to obtain the necessary amount of 'throw,' a small mirror is placed at an angle of 45 degrees to the projector beam; this will re-reverse the image. In order to avoid distortion the position of the projector and the mirror must be such that the reflected beam reaches the screen at an exact right angle. From this it follows that the film and the screen must be at right angles to each other and that

the mirror must be set at an angle of 45 degrees both to film and to screen.¹

The diagram on the opposite page will make the set-up for rear projection quite clear.

III. THE GRAMOPHONE

This purely aural aid to teaching still has its place in our classrooms; indeed, it may be said that, in general, insufficient use of this medium of instruction is made by teachers of Modern Languages. It has distinct advantages of its own: unlike the film-projector, it is easy to manipulate, and very little time is lost when this apparatus is used in the classroom. Moreover, an adequate supply of records is available for use at all stages of instruction, and these records, unlike sound films, are comparatively cheap. Finally, there are many occasions when it is advisable to restrict the appeal to the aural and to eliminate the visual altogether.

The gramophone can be used at all stages of instruction—from the most elementary to the very advanced.

The use of records can facilitate training in phonetic drill: it is indeed fortunate that the vowel sounds are subject to comparatively little distortion when reproduced by this medium. For the teaching of the difficult subject of intonation the gramophone is invaluable and most effective, and excellent records for this purpose are obtainable.

The use of the Dictaphone as an aid to the teaching of pronunciation and intonation may be referred to at this point. Teachers of music frequently urge their pupils to listen to their own performances, and this advice is not always easy to carry out during execution. It is often necessary to give the same reminder to learners of a foreign language, and the Dictaphone, to which many

¹ For these details we are indebted to a letter from Frank Luckman of the Huddersfield Training College, published in *The Film User*, April, 1948.

teachers will have access in schools of commerce, affords a most convenient means of allowing the pupils to listen to their own reading and speaking. Comparisons can then readily be made, and the faults remedied.¹

A distinct advantage of the gramophone is that it permits a class to hear a variety of voices of both sexes. The teacher's accent may be of a very high standard, but classes, and perhaps junior classes in particular, often contain 'doubting Thomases'—the result, most probably, of parental influence and a reflection of the time when, in many schools, language teaching was at a low ebb. In such cases, an efficient teacher will find in the gramophone an unchallengeable ally!

The practice is growing for courses intended for the Junior and Middle Schools to be issued with gramophone-recordings of the text of the lessons. Although this practice is not approved by all teachers, it must be admitted that the reading of the text by a voice other than that of the class-teacher lends variety to the instruction. Furthermore, the great advantage of the gramophone as an aid is that it can furnish unlimited repetition—and repetition is an essential in all teaching of Modern Languages.

The effectiveness of the gramophone as an aid to teaching has been considerably advanced by certain modern inventions.

By the use of a repeater device that was developed before the war by the Linguaphone Institute, sections of a record can be repeated, thus permitting the giving of detailed attention to pronunciation and intonation.

There is also on the market a turntable fitted with a cueing scale, which permits of the selection for replay of any section of a record. The cueing-scale indicator, which is calibrated, moves in phase with the pick-up; conse-

¹ This suggestion is made in *Teaching Modern Languages to Adults*, by C. Y. Ball (Harrap).

quently it is possible to identify any desired passage and to re-set the pick-up (by hand) for the replay.¹ However, even without such a device and after repeated playings of a record, the teacher usually develops a sense of timing and can judge to a nicety the exact spot required on the record.

Another device, utilizing a push-button of the pear-switch type and a wandering lead, allows of the control of the gramophone motor from any part of the classroom: the instrument can be stopped and re-started by the teacher at will as he goes round the room.¹ This device, however, does not control the pick-up, and to stop the motor whilst playing, without first raising the pick-up, might result in damage to the record. Moreover, it would, of course, be necessary to reset the pick-up by hand when restarting the motor. Nevertheless, a device for raising or lowering the pick-up from a remote position could be developed, but the cost might prove prohibitive.

The following instructions, issued by the Linguaphone Institute, Ltd., 207-209, Regent Street, London, W.1, and quoted by Mr. C. Y. Ball in his book *Teaching Modern Languages to Adults* (Harrap), will be of assistance to those making use of gramophones without motor:—

'The technique of stopping and restarting the record should be mastered by the teacher beforehand. To repeat a phrase: Whilst the record is playing, put the index finger of your left hand firmly on the record. This causes it to come to a stop. Do not apply the brake nor lift the needle. Now lift the sound-box with the right hand and put the needle back into the preceding groove. Give the record a firm push with your left index finger in order to start the turntable revolving immediately at the correct speed. The whole action should be done deliberately and firmly. A little practice will ensure accuracy

¹ Obtainable from E.M.I. Sales and Service, Ltd., Sheraton Works, Hayes, Middlesex.

in finding the right phrase. If, however, you find that you have repeated one or two of the preceding sounds, carry on. This can be an advantage, as it prepares the mind to receive the phrase in question; whereas, if the teacher apologises and tries again, a disjointed effect will be created. When you wish to speak to the class, stop the record as above. To continue, simply give the record a firm push in order to set it revolving immediately at the correct speed. In this case there is, of course, no need to lift the sound-box.'

This stopping and restarting procedure can be used in connection with the encouragement of conversation as well as for the purpose of giving dictation from records.

For the upper forms there are recordings of short stories, plays and scenes from plays, prose and verse passages representative of great literature. It is, therefore, possible to bring into the classroom the masters of the art of diction and thus to allow the pupils to hear the foreign language presented in perfect form.

Nor should the use of songs be neglected. A teacher might well decide to conclude a lesson with a popular favourite, such as the singing by Jean Sablon of either 'Sur le pont d'Avignon' or 'Je fais ma révérence.' Many German poems have been set to music, and some of these are well within the capability of second-year pupils: 'Heidenröslein,' 'Die zwei Grenadiere,' 'Meine Ruh ist hin' and 'Der Erlkönig.' The words of these songs would first be learned by heart as poems, and then the song would be played from the recording. Some excellent Spanish ballads could profitably be treated in the same manner.

It should not be overlooked that careful attention must be paid to the speed of the instrument: in the case of speech, a natural reproduction is obtained at the rate of 78 revolutions per minute. At times, in order to emphasize a particular point, it may be useful to vary this speed either upwards or downwards; but it is a mistake to play a

record right through very slowly, as this entails marked distortion of the speech.

What proportion of time in any one lesson should be allowed for the use of the gramophone? It is here impossible to dogmatize. Many teachers reject altogether any idea of a 'gramophone period,' which, they consider, demands too great an effort of concentration; in their view a quarter of an hour is the utmost that should be devoted in a lesson to the playing of records. Other teachers do not hesitate to make use of records throughout the whole of the lesson-period, which, however, is usually broken up by explanations, comments and conversation. This question, like so many others, must be decided by the teacher himself in the light of his experience and of his knowledge of the particular class. The great drawback to the use of the gramophone—and this remark applies equally to other teaching 'aids'—is the tendency for the pupil to develop an attitude of passivity; against this danger the teacher must ever be on his guard. Interest must never be allowed to flag, and the pupils must always be made aware of the fact that some effort is required of them. It is quite easy, for instance, during the repetition of a record, to stop the instrument either by taking off the needle or, better still, by the use of a mechanical device; the pupils can then be asked either to continue the sentence or to answer a question bearing on the record. Active attention must be secured.

Several excellent gramophone courses in foreign languages are on the market; in these courses considerable repetition of records is used, and, indeed, repetition forms an essential element of the method. Such courses, however, are intended mainly for private students working without a teacher's constant supervision. Class instruction proceeds under quite different conditions, and, although some forms of repetition are essential, it is easy to overdo

any one type of repetition, for instance, the repetition by means of gramophone recording.

A gramophone company has issued a first-year French course for schools on 27 double-sided records. Although this is accompanied by a textbook providing grammar and exercises, 'here the record is the source of inspiration and guidance . . . This course is deliberately and conscientiously based on the spoken word. . . . This is a new idea, boldly conceived and carefully worked out. It should be just the thing for Modern Schools, but we warmly recommend all teachers of French to beginners to examine it for themselves.'¹

Although the catalogues of the gramophone companies, in this country and abroad, contain great numbers of excellent and varied recordings, the fact remains that certain subjects are not available for the schools. Teachers would welcome the provision of more records offering a distinct appeal to the young, and the following suggestions are made :—

- (a) Scenes of family life : real people in real circumstances.
- (b) Discussions of sporting activities between young people (not aged professors!)
- (c) Illustrations of emotional variations of speech (women quarrelling; a young man making love; lamentations; threats; worry and fear).
- (d) Illustrations of different types of speech, including the voices of children and adults of both sexes.

It must be added, however, that formal professorial lectures do not appear to be successful as gramophone recordings.

IV. BROADCAST RECEPTION

Like the gramophone, the radio is entirely an aural

¹ From a review by J. E. Travis in *Modern Languages*, March, 1948; p. 74.

'aid.' It is subject to certain well-defined disadvantages. Unlike the gramophone, it is not under the control of the teacher. The broadcast programmes are given at certain fixed times, and, therefore, the exigencies of the timetable, which can never revolve round any one subject in the curriculum, often preclude the use of the radio even when the teacher is most anxious to take advantage of the broadcast. The teacher can exert but little influence on the selection of the matter that is offered to him: '*c'est à prendre ou à laisser !*' Now, the taste and the good sense of the broadcasting authorities may be impeccable, but this particular lesson may be quite unsuitable for the purpose or for the class that the teacher has in mind. The only remedy is to refuse the broadcast. Moreover, educational broadcasts are never repeated : here the possibilities of the radio compare very unfavourably with those of the gramophone and film. This consideration is important, because repetition is an essential element in all instruction in foreign languages.

On the other hand, the radio possesses the great advantage of up-to-dateness : it is a most powerful medium for bringing the contemporary world into the classroom. This principle ought never to be neglected in the compilation of the wireless programmes for schools; otherwise this medium will be making a gratuitous surrender of its great advantage. The inclusion of new matter, related to the events of the day, in which everyone is interested, can invigorate the work of the classroom.

If the best results are to be obtained from the use of radio in the classroom, careful preliminary preparation of the matter is essential, and here the admirable, illustrated booklets published by the B.B.C. can be most useful. It is a great advantage if it can be arranged that the lesson-period begins 10 or 15 minutes before the time of the broadcast. During the actual broadcast the teacher will

make notes, probably on the blackboard, of any words or phrases and other points that may require elucidation. As soon as possible after the broadcast will come the 'follow-up,' to which the greatest importance should be attached. This 'follow-up' can take various forms : conversation on the subject of the broadcast ; a series of questions to be answered ; a 'free' composition suggested by what has been heard ; a dictation of an allied type. In view of the danger that the pupils may adopt a purely passive attitude during the broadcast lesson, this 'follow-up' should never be neglected.'

Special attention should be given to the quality of the reception in the classroom, which should be natural, free from distortion and heard by the whole of the class without strain. The School Broadcasting Council for the United Kingdom reports : 'As far as can be judged, reception at present (November, 1947) reaches a good enough standard in less than 20 per cent. of the schools ; it is fair or just tolerable in 50 per cent., and definitely unsatisfactory in 30 per cent.

'It is doubtful whether the 30 per cent. of schools which have "unsatisfactory" reception should be taking broadcasts at all, and it is certain that broadcasts in the schools classed as "fair" could be much more effective if they were better received.' The teacher should know what constitutes good reception in the classroom ; to ensure that this reception is obtained the teacher should understand the working of the apparatus. He should place the loud-speaker so that the sound is distributed over the whole group of pupils and should adjust the controls (tuning, volume and tone) so as to obtain the maximum results. Although many sets, designed for other purposes, give satisfactory results in the classroom, some manufacturers are now making apparatus specially designed to meet the needs of the schools. It is obvious that to the teacher of

foreign languages satisfactory conditions of broadcast reception are more than usually important.

It is essential that the broadcasting authorities should maintain close contact with the schools : they must not be content to remain in the 'back room' and offer the schools just what they imagine the schools ought to require, but must visit the 'front line' and study classroom reactions. There is now realization of the fact that methods which may appear admirable at the transmission end often fail utterly of their effect at the receiving end : only by close and frank contact between the two partners can real progress be made. The schools do not require the mass production of perfect lessons; they want rather those things that the teacher cannot himself supply. Ordinary textbook matter and such things as dictations ought to be rigorously excluded from the programme. An attempt should be made to maintain uniformity of standard of difficulty—especially at the Intermediate Stage. The delivery should not be too rapid and there should not be too many 'effects.'

It is helpful if the voices to be heard are varied as much as possible in respect of age and sex. The British Broadcasting Corporation has shown awareness of the real needs of the schools and, thanks to experiments recommended by the consultative panels, has realized marked progress in this field.

Some teachers are known to reject the help of the radio out of fear that its use will lead to the development of an attitude of passivity on the part of the class. This is, of course, the danger to which many of the teaching aids now being considered are exposed. Let it be said quite frankly that the responsibility for ensuring that the pupils do not become merely passive devolves on the teacher. The period of listening should be followed by a period of activity having reference to the broadcast—the 'follow-up,' to which reference has already been made. Although here extem-

porization is often inevitable, the sequel to the broadcast should, where possible, be most carefully planned. An endeavour should be made to offer something away from the ordinary textbook exercise : the 'follow-up' should come as an inspiration to the class, an encouragement to activity through interest, and, if this can be achieved, the pupils will rise to the occasion.

Certain changes in broadcasts intended for the Sixth Form would be welcomed. Apart from the excellent 'lectures expliquées,' emphasis might well be removed from historical and literary subjects and laid more strongly than hitherto on an interpretation of present-day life in the foreign country : what is required is the bringing into the classroom of the real, living world of to-day. A note of boldness might well be struck in the case of the documentary broadcasts, in which hitherto there has always been careful avoidance of controversial subjects. It is suggested that, under suitable safeguards, such subjects might well be included in the Sixth-Form broadcasts. The issues at stake could be indicated by an introductory speaker, who might draw attention to the possible bias of the broadcasters. With regard to the choice of speakers for talks in foreign language to our Sixth-Form pupils, more ingenuity might well be shown and recordings might be made by the following : people of various trades and professions; representatives of different social groups; members of organizations such as the Association des Auberges de la Jeunesse; sportsmen, as, for example, members of the Tour de France team; social workers; politicians and trade unionists. Such speakers would indeed be welcome, as they would offer something that the teacher of foreign languages cannot give : they can help to bring the contemporary world into the classroom.

Especially in view of the widening of the scope of the broadcasts, it is important that detailed notes, dealing

with subject matter and vocabulary, should be provided for the use of the teacher.

The advent of television in the classroom will, doubtless, greatly increase the effectiveness of the radio as a teaching 'aid.' When sight is added to sound for teaching purposes, the radio will possess all the advantages of the cinema, while for purity of reception and absence of distortion it may be expected to remain superior. Moreover, greater and closer attention should be secured from the class for a speaker or speakers whom everyone can see.

At present broadcasts for schools are restricted to French and German; many teachers feel that the time has arrived for an extension of this service to Spanish and possibly to other languages.

Broadcasts in foreign languages from abroad and from the foreign services of this country have occasionally been used in our schools, with somewhat varying results, and interested pupils, often encouraged by their teachers, have listened to such broadcasts in their own homes; and, of course, serious adult and other private students have made use of such opportunities of hearing speakers in the foreign tongues. In fact, it is felt in many circles that utterly insufficient use is made of this method of instruction for adult learners, and a change of policy in this matter on the part of the British Broadcasting Corporation would be warmly welcomed. The institution by the Corporation of a full range of courses for adults in the various foreign languages is, therefore, most strongly recommended.

V. THE SOUND FILM

Hitherto, comparatively few attempts have been made to utilize the sound film for purposes of Modern Language instruction. The enthusiastic pioneers in the use of this medium argue that this audio-visual 'aid,' with its simultaneous appeal to both ear and eye—the senses most con-

cerned in the processes of language learning—can be expected to make an effective and powerful contribution to our work. At present, owing to the paucity and the character of the films available, very little evidence exists on which definite conclusions as to the value of this 'aid' can be formulated; the subject will require much research and experimentation, and a final verdict must await the availability of a sufficient supply of suitable teaching films.

What is the present position? In 1934 two teaching films in French were produced by a commercial company, Gaumont British Instructional Films, Ltd.: (i) *The French 'U'* and (ii) *La Gare*. As no one desired to see on the screen a mere reproduction of a classroom lesson on elementary phonetics, this somewhat unfortunate beginning did not lead to further productions; moreover, the number of schools equipped with the rather costly apparatus for sound-film work was insufficient, in the pre-war years, to justify the making of more language instructional films. However, war-time training in the services has shown the value of the sound-film, and increasing numbers of projectors are appearing in our schools. The members of the Films Committee of the Modern Language Association have written the scenario of a film entitled *La Famille Martin*, and the production has been sponsored by the National Committee for Visual Aids. Of the pre-view of this film (17.xii.1948) the critic of *The Times Educational Supplement* wrote: '*La Famille Martin*¹ was outstanding; in 15 minutes it gave an admirable picture of a middle-class French home, extensive aerial and ground views of Paris, and a commentary that paid full attention to both vocabulary and idiom.' This authentically French production should prove a very useful and effective teaching film. Future productions will be influenced, both in con-

¹ This film has been made by the National Committee for Visual Aids in Education, and is distributed through the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids, 33, Queen Anne Street, W.1.

tent and in number, by the reception accorded to this pioneer instructional film; it is, however, obvious that no great extension of the use of the cinema for language teaching will take place until there exists an adequate supply of really suitable films.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that the National Committee on Visual Aids in Education, recently established by the joint efforts of the national associations of teachers and the local education authorities, will play its part in securing that such films are produced.

In the meantime teachers anxious to experiment with the new medium must utilize films which have not been produced specifically for teaching purposes or which, even if they do fulfil this requirement, are not entirely suitable for the needs of English pupils studying foreign languages.

Many teachers have made use of 16 mm. French documentary films with extremely good results. Such films are obtainable from the following sources :—

(1) Service du Cinéma, French Institute, Queensberry Way, London, S.W.7. Many excellent documentaries, travel films, news reels and war films, together with a few literary and scientific films.

(2) French Railways, Ltd., 179, Piccadilly, London, W.1. Films at present available include: *Voie Libre*, *En 49 Jours*, *Essais de Locomotives*, *Au Service de la France*. The text of the commentaries is, in most cases, obtainable.

(3) Central Film Library, Imperial Institute, London, S.W.7. Two reels of specially selected and recorded Canadian songs.

(4) National Film Board of Canada, Canada House, Trafalgar Square, London, S.W.1. French versions of many of the outstanding documentary films made by this film unit; also a number of Canadian folk songs. The sound reproduction reaches a high standard. The text of many of the commentaries is available.

(5) It is also possible that in the near future 16 mm. French versions of certain films held by the Central Office of Information (Norgeby House, 83, Baker Street, London, W.1) may become available for schools.

Attempts to use available films in the classroom suggest the following observations :—

(a) The French commentary is often spoken so very rapidly that only senior pupils of marked linguistic ability can follow the speaker.

(b) The force of this criticism greatly diminishes when the text of the commentary is available for study in class; unfortunately this is far from being the rule with existing films, as the need to supply the text had not been brought home to the producing units.

(c) The excessive use made of 'musique d'accompagnement' proves very distracting to foreign students attempting to follow the commentary. There is, of course, a clash here between the requirements of our classes and the modern technique of the documentary film.

(d) The language is sometimes excessively technical.

(e) The sound-track shows great variations in quality and, in many cases, is below the standard required for use with students learning a foreign language.

However, despite the existence of these drawbacks, much has been learned from the use of these documentary films, many of which, as films, are of outstanding quality and great beauty. Their use has brought a sense of a real world and a living language into the classroom and has enabled pupils to hear a variety of foreign speakers—to become acquainted with good standards of pronunciation and intonation. A class studying Romantic Poetry found the film *Sur les Chemins de Lamartine* most helpful and inspiring.

It is interesting to note that, by the use of a microphone, a running commentary can readily be added to a silent

film. The amplifier cable is connected to the microphone instead of to the projector. The same method can also be utilized in cases where it is desired to substitute a 'live' commentary for the speech or background noises of the sound-track. This has been successfully done in the case of the film *Les Coulisses du Zoo*, where the sound-track was of little use for teaching purposes.

With regard to the types of film that might be utilized for instructional purposes in Modern Languages, if and when available, the following suggestions are made in the light of experience so far gained :—

(a) *Phonetics* : Short films showing the part played by the various vocal organs in production of the sounds; full use to be made of 'close-ups' and diagrammatic devices.

(b) *Intonation* : It is suggested that this subject would lend itself to film treatment even more effectively than to the medium of the gramophone. The accompaniment of the sound with the appropriate gesture or facial expression should obviously be most effective. Use could further be made of diagrams to represent the rise and fall of the intonation curve. The teaching of intonation is always a difficult and often a neglected subject; it may well be that the film is the ideal medium for our purpose.

(c) *Song Films* : The excellent *Chants Populaires* (Canadian Film Unit) have proved very successful wherever they have been used. Each reel contains two songs interpreted by the Alouette Quartette of singers; each song is illustrated by 'dessins animés' and is sung twice, the class being invited to join in at the second time. The method is successful, even with beginners; indeed, one Modern School has utilized these films for the initial stages of instruction, the work of the class being based upon the song heard and sung.

(d) *Scenes of Daily Life* : Ordinary incidents in the general daily life of the foreign country offer great possibilities.

Children are always intensely interested in details of differences between themselves and the foreigner; the films can bring this aspect into the classroom, and the subject is almost inexhaustible, as the following suggestions indicate: typical incidents in the daily life of the boy or girl; life at school—at work and at play; a visit to a market in a provincial town; shopping expeditions; scenes at a youth hostel; sports film with running commentary in explanation; travelling; life in a hotel; a visit to a fairground, etc.

(e) *Films based on a story*: Films based on playlets would probably make a strong appeal, and the dramatization of short stories offers great possibilities. But the film ought not to be too long, and it must be remembered that a 'conte' by Guy de Maupassant furnishes sufficient material for a full-length feature film. A reduction to 16 mm. of the 25 minute thriller *Bon Voyage*, produced by Alfred Hitchcock for the Ministry of Information in the war years, would prove extremely popular. Of course, cinema technique differs widely from the technique of the theatre, and it may be necessary for teaching purposes to overweight the dialogue.

(f) *Scenes from great plays*: Such films, intended rather for senior pupils, would afford the opportunity of hearing and seeing the classics interpreted by artists of distinction.

(g) *Descriptive films with commentary*: Here the possibilities are very great: the cinema enables us to bring vividly before our classes the scenery, the fauna and flora, the architecture, the life and the industries of the foreign country. *Un Nouveau Paradis pour les Castors* (Canadian National Film Board) is an excellent example of this type of film: the speech is very clear and distinct, the language is not technical, and the text of the commentary is available.

(h) *Films to illustrate the literature*: Reference has already been made to the film *Sur les Chemins de Lamartine*, and no

doubt other films of the same nature will be forthcoming.

In the making of all these films for classroom purposes a most important consideration will be the quality and the clarity of the sound reproduction. For teaching purposes it is essential that the speech be distinct and free from distortion. If it is necessary for a 35 mm. film to be reduced to 16 mm., the best and most up-to-date methods of reduction of the sound-track must be employed. This is a technical matter, which it would be out of place to discuss here, but good results on sub-standard film are undoubtedly possible and should be available for use in the classroom. The possibility is being considered of re-issuing certain of the French documentary films with a new and specially recorded sound-track suitable for use in English schools. In any case, the question of the audibility and clarity of the speech must receive the greatest attention; otherwise pupils will be discouraged and the new medium fall into disrepute.

Hints on the Operation of the Apparatus in the Classroom

(1) Investigate the possibilities of rear projection: see Section II above.

(2) Good organization will cut down the loss of time involved in setting up the instrument, rewinding of film and change of spools. After all, colleagues in the laboratories have for years faced difficulties of this nature!

(3) Understand fully the working of the projector: films are easily damaged by incorrect and careless use.

(4) The acoustics of the room and the setting up of the loudspeaker greatly influence the quality of the sound. Walls that have a high degree of reflectivity lead to marked distortion. The loud-speaker must not be too low: place it above the audience, at about two-thirds of the height of the screen, and tilt it slightly forward, so that the sound will spread over the class freely. It may be necessary to

discover by experiment the position where the loud-speaker will give maximum results. See that the class is suitably placed to receive the 'spread' of sound.

Use of the Film

Here again it must be emphasized that there can be no serious suggestion that the teacher can sit back in the confident expectation that his task will be performed for him by the film. On the contrary, there is no doubt whatever that the use of this very special and very powerful teaching 'aid' will impose many new demands upon the teacher. In the first place, the material will require careful selection, if and when available, and must be carefully correlated with the scheme of work of the class; account must be taken of the ability of the class to profit from the material offered.

In order that the material may be used to the best advantage it must receive careful preliminary study, and a pre-view of the film is most desirable, if not essential. It is to be hoped that, in the case of all films produced for teaching purposes, the full text of the commentary or dialogue will be available. It will be for the teacher to decide whether this text should be in the hands of the class and, if so, at what stage the pupils should have it before them. But, in any case, it must be emphasized that the verbatim text is required in order to work out the best method of presentation of the matter. Preliminary work is necessary with the class, and without the text this preparation is impossible.

One of the great advantages of this new teaching medium is that unlimited repetition is possible. Now, in all language teaching repetition must play an essential part; the teacher will wish to screen a film at least twice, and these successive screenings permit the driving home of special points in the intervals.

After the actual screening must come the 'follow up,' which can take various forms; it must receive special care and ought not to come to the class as an anti-climax. The aim should be to make it at least as inspiring as the actual film itself. And here the ingenuity and creative faculty of the teacher can find their full scope: the possibilities are, of course, very numerous: (a) questionnaire on the subject matter of the film; (b) summary of the film; (c) the writing of a scenario or play in imitation of, or suggested by, the film just witnessed.

During the actual screening of the film everything should be done to keep the class mentally alert and listening to the voice from the loudspeaker. In this connection, it must be remembered that the hypnotic appeal of sight is normally much greater than that of sound: attention, therefore, will tend to be concentrated on the visual to the neglect of the aural impressions. This tendency should diminish with repetition of the film, and this matter might profitably be investigated on scientific lines. Careful preliminary preparation and subsequent 'follow up' can do much to counteract the development of an attitude of passivity on the part of the class. With due precaution the film can be stopped, if desired, for the teacher to ask questions.

In the case of foreign films screened in this country in the commercial cinemas, it is customary for English subtitles to be thrown on the screen. This practice would, obviously, be most undesirable in the case of films screened for instructional purposes: the attention of the class should be focused on the sound and the appearance of a written translation of the dialogue would be exceedingly distracting.

Pupils should be encouraged, when the opportunity occurs, to witness the screening of foreign films in the languages studied. In some schools, which possess a sound-film

projector, Film Societies for the appreciation of the art of the cinema have been organized. In this connection foreign films have an important part to play, and many of these films (e.g. *Nous les Gosses*) are becoming available on 16 mm. celluloid. French feature films can teach much about the country, the people and the life, and they offer the language in action. Moreover, the film is an outstanding achievement of French art and should be known for that alone.

FOREIGN CONTACTS AND MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

I. THE FOREIGN 'ASSISTANT' OR 'ASSISTANTE'

The scheme for receiving students and young teachers from France and Switzerland into our schools and, reciprocally, for sending our own students and teachers abroad has everything to commend it. The scheme is outlined in Rules No. 56, issued by the Ministry of Education in November, 1946. The Assistant is attached to a particular school for a year from the beginning of the autumn term till the close of the following summer term. He receives either full board and lodging, together with a money allowance of £50, or a maintenance allowance of £200 for the period, payable in ten monthly instalments.

Application for the services of an Assistant must be made well in advance, and it is usually necessary to inform the Local Education Authority before the end of the preceding autumn term. Although Assistants are normally attached to Secondary Grammar Schools, it is possible for some appointments to be made to Secondary Schools of other types. It is to be noted that the number of German-speaking Swiss candidates is small.

The receiving school can reap considerable benefit from the presence of the Assistant, but it is essential that all candidates selected for these appointments should have a

reasonably good standard of pronunciation. The work of the Modern Language staff must not be hindered or nullified by the presence in the schools of a foreigner with a marked provincial accent. This does not mean, of course, that only candidates from in and around the metropolis must be accepted under the scheme : in France, for instance, many people from the Midi have very acceptable pronunciation. It must, however, be emphasized that, in our view, a reasonable standard of speech, as well as of personality and bearing, ought to be essential prerequisites for acceptance as an Assistant.

The presence of an Assistant in the school will impose great demands on the head of the Department. Not only must the work be very carefully planned, but it must be closely related to the personality and capacity of the Assistant. The head of the Department and his colleagues must endeavour to 'sum up' the newcomer as quickly as possible. They must not commit the error of expecting to receive a fully trained teacher ; indeed, unless the foreigner has been a member of a youth group in his own country, he may have had no opportunities of exercising authority. Our prefect system, as well as the degree of freedom permitted in our schools and the wide range of our out-of-school activities, will be entirely novel to our visitor. He should be given time, assistance and encouragement to make the necessary adjustments.

In arranging a suitable scheme of work for the Assistant certain difficulties will appear. The work required of him 'must not exceed 12 hours a week, suitably distributed so as to secure that there shall be no excessive amount assigned to any one day.' This work shall normally be to 'conduct small conversation groups, consisting of pupils who have acquired such proficiency and facility in the foreign language as will enable them to take an active share in the conversation. This may be supplemented, if

desired, by exercises in reading, dictation and oral composition.' Now, it is not always easy, practical or advisable to detach small groups from a class, although it is possible to divide the class, the Assistant taking one half and the regular teacher the remainder. Moreover, it is allowable, in accordance with the Rules, for the Assistant to undertake a strictly limited amount of class instruction, provided that the Assistant is willing to do so and that the prior consent of the Ministry has been obtained.

French or German conversation as such is not a felicitous choice, and it is always advisable to be more precise and definite. Conversation should arise naturally out of the work of the class, and should never be regarded, either by teacher or taught, as something extraneous. The lesson where conversation occupies an important place should have a definite aim and should be carefully planned : any meandering should be avoided.

It is usually impossible for the Assistant to work with all the classes in the school, but it has been found most useful for him to pay occasional visits to classes to which he is not normally attached.

It is to the work of the Sixth Form that the Assistant can make his greatest contribution. But it must be pointed out that, if the Assistant proves himself a master in the difficult art of 'lecture expliquée,' the receiving school will indeed be fortunate. As an experiment an essay subject might be given to the Assistant to work up with the group by means of discussion; the Assistant would then correct the written attempts of the members.

Short lectures, either with or without illustrations, could be given to the Senior Forms; notes in essay form could be written up by the pupils and subsequently corrected by the Assistant. Thus, knowledge of the foreign country would be extended. Full advantage should be taken of any special knowledge or interest of the Assistant, but suitable subjects

for this treatment are legion. A series of film-strips might prove most suggestive and helpful in this connection (see above pages 208-209). Let the Assistant commence with a talk about his own little corner of the world.

It is obvious that the Assistant would render invaluable help in the work of the French or German Circle : a man with experience of youth work in his own country would be most useful.

In conclusion, it should be impressed upon the Assistant that it is his duty to bring into the English school some knowledge of the life, the customs and the way of thinking of his own country and that his task should not be limited to the imparting of a little conversational fluency.

II. EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE

The exchange of letters with young people abroad can be a very effective means of maintaining interest and increasing knowledge ; indeed, such interchange of correspondence should be regarded as one of the most useful means of bringing a sense of reality into the study of a foreign tongue.

Foreign correspondents can be secured in various ways. Very often the most successful correspondence arises as a result of contacts made by members of the staff during visits to the foreign country. The affiliation of English schools to schools abroad also furnishes an easy and effective solution of the problem. But it must be pointed out that the organization of school correspondence with foreign countries is in urgent need of rationalization ; there is at present much overlapping, and, on the other hand, there are many serious gaps : it is, for instance, still very difficult, owing to the after-effects of the war, to organize school correspondence with some countries even in Western Europe. Use may be made of various official, semi-official and other agencies, and the following list will be found useful :—

France and Belgium

(1) The Ministry of Education will receive and transmit to the proper quarter applications from English schools. Communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Ministry of Education, Information and External Relations Branch, Curzon Street House, Curzon Street, London, W.1.

(2) The Modern Language Association, 23, Southampton Place, London, W.C.1.

(3) International Correspondence Exchange (under the auspices of the British Council, the Ministry of Education, the National Union of Students and the Workers' Education Association), 3, Endsleigh Street, London, W.C.1 (for persons above the school-leaving age).

(4) Council for Education in World Citizenship, Overseas Correspondence Department, 11, Maiden Lane, London, W.C.2.

(5) International Scholastic Correspondence (Mr. P. Hines), 3, Eaton Avenue, Chester.

(6) Educational Institute of Scotland, 46-47, Moray Place, Edinburgh.

Switzerland

(1) 'Pro Juventute,' 8, Seefeldstrasse, Zurich.

(2) International Correspondence Exchange (for the under-twenties).

Germany

(1) At the request of the Ministry of Education (see Circular 162, issued 3rd March, 1948) the Modern Language Association has undertaken to link schools for the purpose of correspondence with schools in the British Zone of Germany.

(2) International Correspondence Exchange.

Austria

International Correspondence Exchange.

Spain, Portugal and South America

(1) Canning House (Hispanic Council and Luso-Brazilian Council), 4, Upper Berkeley Street, Portman Square, London, W.1.

(2) The International Correspondence Exchange.

Russia

The International Correspondence Exchange is endeavouring to make some arrangements for the benefit of students.

Italy

(1) The Modern Language Association has a scheme under consideration.

(2) The International Correspondence Exchange.

Balkans, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Holland, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Yugoslavia

Application should be made to the International Correspondence Exchange.

There is inevitably something very 'hit or miss' in these exchanges, and all too often failure is an early outcome. But a surprising number of exchanges are very successful, and, indeed, many attain what is a most desirable object : they lead to an exchange of visits. In the pairing of the boys and girls the following factors are taken into consideration : age ; number of years of study of the language ; aptitude and ability ; occupation of the parents ; hobbies and special interests of the pupils.

As, in modern times, correspondence as an art has undoubtedly declined, it is perhaps advisable to begin with modest aims. One letter a month maintained with regularity is better than a more frequent exchange in the early stages leading to a rapid abandonment of the correspon-

dence. There is much to be said for a really definite scheme with fixed dates for the despatch of letters on both sides : routine has a useful part to play in our lives !

At the outset a general talk might be given to the class on the aims and scope of the scheme, the desirability for regularity in the exchange of letters being strongly emphasized. If the pupils are young, they might well be encouraged to write mainly in their own language—at least, in the early stages : much benefit can result from the reading of letters written in the language that is being studied, and it is very easy to exaggerate the benefits arising from very immature attempts to write halting sentences in a foreign language. Correction of errors, too, by young foreign pupils is not always satisfactory.

The teacher can do much to encourage the development of a successful correspondence. While not attempting anything that would savour of rigid control, he can throw out hints for possible subjects likely to prove of interest to the foreign pupil ; he can make it clear to the class that interesting subjects are never lacking. Suitable extracts from letters received from abroad can be read aloud in class, and explanation of obscure points can be given. Many teachers accept a letter written in the foreign language as a substitute for the normal homework. Finally, pupils do appreciate any suggestions that may be made for little gifts or publications that would be acceptable abroad.

III. AFFILIATION AND LINKING OF SCHOOLS

All teachers will be in full agreement with the policy of the Ministry of Education to encourage the linking of schools in this country with schools abroad. At present the scheme is only in its infancy, but already sufficient experience has been obtained to show the great possibilities of the undertaking.

Applications for the linking of schools should be addressed to the Information and External Relations Branch of the Ministry of Education, Curzon Street House, Curzon Street, London, W.1. Every endeavour is made to pair off schools 'which have similar interests and which are situated in districts, such as seaports, rural areas or towns, with similar interests.'

After an initial exchange of good wishes and courtesies between the linked schools, it is easy to arrange for the pairing of pupils for purposes of correspondence, bearing in mind the usual factors : age ; occupation of parent ; attainment ; aptitude ; hobbies and interests. This correspondence between pupils of schools that are definitely linked through official channels starts off with a distinct advantage and with every promise of success.

But the possibilities of affiliation only begin with this exchange of correspondence, and the objects of the scheme are of a wide and ambitious character. The schools will doubtless proceed naturally to the exchange of such things as school magazines, newspapers, periodicals, especially of an illustrated character, books for the school libraries, regional publications, and the like. The interests and tastes of young people must here be borne in mind, and books on games and hobbies would be welcomed. There is no doubt that specimens of pupils' work in art and literary composition in the mother tongue would have a stimulating effect abroad, and a further suggestion is the exchange of essays written in the foreign languages to be sent for correction in the linked school. Such essays should, obviously, be the work of senior pupils. Most schools would wish to send a list of questions on which further information from the linked school would be appreciated, and the drafting of such a questionnaire could be made very stimulating.

All this is work that can be carried out throughout the

year; but, of course, the real aim of this scheme of affiliation is the exchange of living beings—pupils accompanied by their teachers. Such exchanges between paired schools have already started, and, despite the great difficulties arising out of the present state of foreign travel, an early extension and development of such exchange visits may confidently be anticipated.

In brief, the plan assumes that each school party will spend a period in the area of the linked school, living in the homes of the foreign pupils, and, if the time of the visit permits, attending certain classes at the school. It is obvious that such an undertaking is quite beyond the scope of a mere school journey and that it has a very definite and distinct educational purpose.

For some time to come there must be experimentation in order to ascertain the ideal arrangements for these group-exchange visits. The questions to be solved would include the following : (1) The age ranges of the pupils. (2) The most advantageous length of the visit. (3) The time of the year when such visits can best be made. (4) The number of accompanying staff. (5) The planning of the programme for the visit.

It is obvious that the pupils selected to take part in such visits must have such knowledge of the foreign language as would make their period of residence abroad profitable. Interest in the foreign language and adaptability are also important factors to be taken into consideration in the selection of pupils for exchange visits. In general, junior pupils will not be chosen. An important consideration is that, if the visit is to take place during term-time—and apparently this is contemplated—then the work of the school must suffer as little interruption as possible, and account must obviously be taken of the work of preparation for examinations in the respective countries. We are not living in a world specially organized to meet the full

requirements of teachers of Modern Languages, and a dose of realism and a due sense of proportion must be maintained. An obvious view is to recommend the selection of pupils who are specializing in Modern Languages in the Sixth Forms in English schools, but most teachers would not desire the scheme for exchanges during term-time to be limited to this category of pupils. The French, on the other hand, would probably be very reluctant to interfere sacrilegiously with preparation for the 'baccalauréat' and would, consequently, be inclined to select pupils below the age of 16 years.

With regard to arrangements for travelling and the general organization of the visit, help and advice can be obtained on application to the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, Hamilton House, London, W.C.1.

Many exchange visits are arranged between the pupils of schools not linked under any official scheme. Such visits usually take place during the school holidays and may be organized either on a group basis or as exchanges between individual pupils. Teachers desirous of organizing 'group' exchanges can obtain help on application to the Secretary, Joint Committee of the Four Secondary Associations, Gordon House, 29, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. Many successful exchanges are arranged through this organization with schools in France, Belgium, Switzerland and other countries.

In the case of individual exchanges application should be made to the Secretary, Modern Language Association, 23, Southampton Place, London, W.C.1.

The necessity of early application in all cases, both group and individual, must be emphasized.

IV. VISITS OF FOREIGN ACTORS

For many years companies of foreign actors have

visited this country, and the value of such visits is generally appreciated. Not only do these performances of foreign plays stimulate the interest of the pupils in our schools, but they afford an opportunity of witnessing plays produced and acted with an art that is distinctly not English.

If the full advantages of attendance at the performance of a foreign play are to be reaped, the teacher must be willing to do much preliminary work : a summary of the work should be given, and the play should be read through, if not 'in toto,' at any rate in suitably selected extracts. Even a weak form is thrilled to be able to recognize certain key sentences in the principal scenes of the play.

V. VISITS BY FOREIGN LECTURERS

Advantage should also be taken of lectures given by visitors from abroad. In many centres such lectures are organized by the local university, the 'Modern Language Association' or the 'Alliance Française,' and often special lectures are arranged for pupils of our Secondary Schools. Choice of subject is here most important, and it is essential that the lecturer should be capable of holding the attention of young people whose knowledge of the language is very far from perfect.

VI. 'LE CERCLE FRANÇAIS'

The existence in the school of a successful French Circle can give a most powerful stimulus to the interest taken in the language. But the organization of this school society, it must be pointed out, should not be undertaken lightly : it makes considerable demands on the time and energy of the Modern Language staff, and is undoubtedly a task for an enthusiastic teacher endowed with the right personality. The activity can be a source of great satisfaction and

certainly gives scope for the exercise of ingenuity and imagination.

The staff would be well advised to allow the pupils to take a prominent part in the organization and the arrangements of the society, as well as in the actual conduct of the meetings, and it is desirable to work through a democratically elected committee. As for the actual composition of the programmes for the meetings of the circle, the possibilities are almost unlimited, but the following suggestions might be considered:—

1. Play readings.
2. Discussions and debates.
3. Lectures by visitors or by the Assistant.
4. Lecturettes by pupils.
5. Production of short plays.
6. Screening of films.
7. Charades.
8. Musical programme and 'sing-song.'
9. Social functions.
10. Games of various types. Suitable books of parlour games can be obtained from abroad, and many useful suggestions can be gathered from the wireless programmes, e.g. 'Twenty Questions.'

The presence in the school of a foreign Assistant should be very helpful in the running of the circle. The same considerations would, naturally, apply in the case of foreign languages other than French.

VII. PROJECT WORK

In recent years attempts have been made in many schools to break down the artificial barriers set up in the classroom between the various branches of the curriculum, and much attention has been devoted to the development of the Project Method. This development in the technique of teaching gives to the pupil a realization of the unity of

knowledge, and, even if this realization be only very incomplete, the gain is tremendous. Moreover, the interest of the pupil is aroused and stimulated by the activity demanded of him by the new method; indeed, it is claimed that this method is successful with many pupils with whom the ordinary methods of instruction prove most ineffective. A further advantage of the Project and allied methods is that the pupils come to realize the value of co-operation and concerted effort—again a valuable lesson.

The Project Method involves the setting of a task that requires directed work extending over a period of time, and this task may be performed by individuals as well as by groups. The Project differs from an 'assignment' of work in that it is usually *investigation* work based on material other than the ordinary classroom textbook, map or notebook. The fact that the Project Method involves creation rather than mere reproduction of matter explains the stimulating effect of this new technique.

It is only natural that Modern Language teaching should receive the influence of this new attitude, and it is necessary to examine how far the Project Method can profitably be applied in this subject.

In certain subjects the method is worked out as a mere activity: the keeping of bees or the rearing of pigs are examples of such 'projects.' In this category would fall many activities discussed elsewhere in the present chapter: school visits abroad; entertaining foreign pupils; production of a play in a foreign language.

In the application of project work to Modern Languages the linguistic side would probably not be the direct and immediate concern,¹ and the method would be developed as an aspect of the study of the life of the foreign country. This, of course, would be in full accord with modern con-

¹ See, however, the concluding paragraph of this chapter: 'Note on Project and Activity Work in the Sixth Form'.

ceptions of the scope and purpose of Modern Language teaching.

Now, the Project Method is based either on 'field work' or on 'research work.' In the study of aspects of the civilization of foreign countries it is usually the latter type that is involved. The work could be arranged for individuals, for sections of a class, for complete classes, or, perhaps, in extreme cases, for a whole school. Successful project work should lead to the presentation of a body of material either in literary or in visual or model form : an orderly arranged and classified series of specimens would be acceptable. The work might even lead to the staging of an exhibition, in which the whole of the school would be involved : such an exhibition might well be planned as the contribution of the school to the work of a society for the furtherance of good international relations.

A variety of methods of investigation could be employed in carrying out the project : study of works and reference books connected with the foreign country and written either in English or in the foreign language ; correspondence with friends abroad ; reading of foreign newspapers ; systematic consideration of material from abroad. Division of labour is essential to the success of the undertaking, and the work could be subdivided by locality as well as by the aspect under consideration. For instance, of pupils who are corresponding with friends in Brittany, one could be restricted to agriculture as a theme : it should be with him a labour of love to find out as much as possible about farming in that region, and the vocabulary used should be in French. Another pupil could take the subject of fisheries, and yet another that of the tourist industry, and so on. The outcome should be the presentation by the group of a fairly complete picture of life in Brittany. Incidentally, such an application of the Project Method would infuse new life into correspondence with foreign pupils and, from

the linguistic point of view, would lead to the acquisition of vocabulary and power of expression in the foreign language. The carrying out of a project of this type presupposes a fair knowledge of the language, but, given suitable direction and organization, the scheme need not be restricted to the senior pupils.

If any group engaged on a project has the opportunity to travel abroad, 'field work' becomes a possibility, and new sources of information will be revealed.

A correspondent supplies the following account of the application of the Project Method in his own school :—

(a) Aim of the Project :

The class is allowed to select one of a variety of suitable projects : a scrapbook on France ; a magazine ; an encyclopaedia ; a study of a particular region of the country.

(b) The Project Lesson :

The master's chair is taken by an elected chairman (or editor), whose term of office is restricted to three meetings in order to give as many pupils as possible the opportunity of presiding over the meeting. The duties of the chairman are as follows :—

1. To receive contributions to the project from members of the class.
2. To take the chair at meetings of the class.
3. To be responsible for looking after and filing all contributions received during his term of office.
4. To arrange the programme for each meeting of the class.

Other officers include the vice-chairman, who assists the chairman and presides during his absence, and the secretary, who keeps a record of the events.

Each meeting commences with the reading of the minutes of the preceding meeting, after which the pupils who have brought a contribution read it aloud or show it to the class. Questions are asked and criticisms are offered.

It is then decided by vote whether the contribution shall be adopted or whether it shall be returned to the author for amendment. Meetings are held according to the interest shown—either once a fortnight or once a week.

If the class is bright and co-operative, a project can be elaborate and a definite time-limit can be fixed; in addition to the normal 'contributors', certain suitable pupils can be nominated to carry out the duties of artists, map-designers and typists. If the class is less co-operative or not sufficiently intelligent, a simpler project, such as collecting material for a scrapbook, is more suitable. In this case contributions are discussed, and the completion of the project involves merely the linking together of the individual efforts of the pupils.

The following advantages are claimed for project work organized on these lines :—

(1) *The breaking down of the separateness of each school subject.*

One main idea of school projects is to make school knowledge more coherent, and, although the projects referred to in this summary may not be projects in the strict sense, and the differences between the disciplines may not be eliminated altogether, these suggestive schemes do tend to strike across into other fields—science and history, for instance. Moreover, it is quite possible for teachers in different departments to elaborate a combined project, e.g. the French Revolution.

The idea of a *Semaine Française* has close affinities with the original project conception.

(2) *The breaking down of the boundaries between school and life.*

Project work tends to bring the classroom into closer contact with the wider world outside. The beginner, who brings along an old French Bible, a children's encyclo-

paedia, photographs, newspaper cuttings, or postage-stamps, and who begins to examine and study these treasures, shows that he relates his school learning to the events and things outside the classroom.

(3) *The development of interests and initiative.*

Here projects can play an important part. The project lesson is above all the pupils' lesson, and the conduct and the outcome of the lesson are regarded as the work of the class. Often the slacker on the project is pulled up by his fellows in a more devastating manner than a teacher would ever dare to do! Pupils, who in the set lesson are not at all brilliant, often show interest and promise in the project : to work in co-operation with others at the creation of something comes to them as an inspiration. Whatever interests they may have can be brought to bear, for instance, in the production of a French magazine, as witness the variety of topics which can be selected and documented by a Lower Fourth Form.

(4) *A change in the group structure.*

Normally the teacher faces the class, but there are times when it is advantageous to institute a different arrangement. And here the project conception will prove useful. The class now faces a boy as speaker. The fact that now the pupils speak to one another on a serious subject, that they now pass on to one another interesting items of information, makes the pupils more active and communicative as learners. They learn to face their own contemporaries—and not merely their seniors—with interesting thoughts.

(5) *Co-operation between members of the staff.*

The execution of any one project must inevitably impinge upon many of the school subjects and must, it may be expected, involve the co-operation of several of the members of the staff of the school. In these days of the

specialist subject teacher this is perhaps the most valuable result of the method.

Note on Project and Activity Work in the Sixth Form.

Hitherto consideration has been given to Project Work in the Junior and Middle School; there is, however, no reason why the new methods and the new outlook should not be exploited in the higher forms. With senior pupils, who have obtained an adequate knowledge of the foreign language and a reasonable power of expression in the medium, the approach may be more directly linguistic. A wide range of possible subjects is open for selection, and the foundations of sound methods of research may well be laid. The possibilities are endless. Apart from projects proper, transcending the bounds that divide subject from subject, much of the study of a foreign literature could with advantage be carried out on activity lines: in this way the joy of creation may well bring new and invigorating inspiration to the classroom work.

CHAPTER VII

MODERN LANGUAGES IN TECHNICAL AND COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS

DEFINITION

THE term Technical Education covers such a great variety of institutions and such a wide age-range, that we must begin by defining the limits of this chapter. Here we are not concerned with Senior Technical Schools, with Technical Colleges where pupils above the age of 18 are in the majority, nor with Evening Institutes offering a wide variety of subjects to part-time students of post-school age. The work of Technical Colleges, reaching frequently to Degree standard, does not interest us at this point, while the teaching of Modern Languages in Evening Institutes is treated in our Chapter IX. In this chapter we shall deal chiefly with Secondary Technical Schools in which the age of the pupils, at present, rarely exceeds 16.

TRIPARTISM

The term Secondary Technical School, often abbreviated to Technical School, is applied to one member of the new Secondary School system, the other two in the tripartite scheme being the Grammar School and the Modern School. These three partners are intended to provide suitable courses of post-primary education, up to the age eventually of at least 16, for all children according to the 'type', academic, technical or modern, in which each of them is supposed to fall. It must, however, be pointed out that this three-fold classification of types, as adumbrated in Chapter III of the Hadow Report of 1926 and more fully restated in the Norwood Report of 1941, is not

specifically prescribed in the Education Act of 1944, but has been developed through administrative action. Recently, however, tripartism has been severely criticized both by psychologists and educationists.

TRIPARTISM ATTACKED

The attack takes two forms: there are the psychologists who question whether there really exist three broad types of pupils, who can be clearly labelled Academic, Technical or Modern; and there are the psychologists and educationists who claim that, even if these types exist, there are no reliable means of selecting children for specialized or biassed courses in secondary schools at the age of 11 or 12. Already in 1943 Professor Sir Cyril Burt had attacked as unscientific 'any scheme of organization which proposes to classify children at the age of 11 or 12 according to qualitative mental types rather than according to general intelligence'; while Mr. D. F. McIntosh, the Director of Education of Fife, speaking at the British Association Meetings of 1947, attacked the 'inclusion in a practical scheme of any tests purporting to measure specific abilities or aptitudes' (*Times Educational Supplement*, 6th September, 1947). To these opinions we may add those of Dr. C. Fleming of the Institute of Education, who not only labels as a myth the existence of three types corresponding to the administrative provision of buildings which may house separate schools of Academic, Technical or Modern type, but maintains that all the various methods of selection have been inadequate or unreliable (*Schoolmaster*, 28th August, 1947). Nevertheless, the existence of the three types and the development of schools to correspond to them are assumed throughout the Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 9 ('The New Secondary Education') and in such Circulars as No. 144 to Local Education Authorities, who are urged to allocate a certain percentage

(10 to 15 per cent.) of Secondary School places to Technical Schools and to complete their development along tripartite lines.

THE COMMON COURSE

With such differences of opinion waiting to be resolved between the Ministry and some of the experts, and considering that in any case many years must elapse before the development plans can be translated into new buildings, technical education must be regarded as in a state of transition. It is, therefore, difficult to offer concrete suggestions on the teaching of Modern Languages (or, indeed, of almost any subject) in such schools, when their organization is in a fluid state. If the psychologists prevail, almost the only possible application of their ideas is to submit all children to a common course of instruction for a year or two between the ages of 11 and 13. After this period, it might be easier to distinguish more clearly the qualitative mental types into which they fall, and to assess their all-round ability and aptitude for any of the different types of continued secondary education. One difficulty would be to settle which should be the subjects of instruction of the Common Course and the standard at which to aim; for, if certain subjects (for example, Languages and some branches of Mathematics) were omitted altogether or taught to an inferior standard, it would be well-nigh impossible to reach a sound standard in the remaining years of the Academic or the Technical Courses. This latter point applies particularly, though not solely, to Modern Languages.

LANGUAGES IN THE 'COMMON COURSE'

As the Common Course is intended as a groundwork for the future academic and technical pupil as well as for the 'modern' pupil, it is inconceivable that it should exclude

subjects that the pupils of the two former categories will definitely need to master. We are, therefore, left with the conclusion that Modern Language teaching in the common school period would have to be of such a nature as to form a firm basis for further study: the observations and suggestions concerning the early stages of language learning contained in our Chapter V would, therefore, be fully applicable. This means that the technical pupil-to-be would normally under this scheme, which is, in fact, proposed by some Local Authorities, have an opportunity of laying a real foundation on which he will be able to build if the course which he pursues after the age of 13 permits. Arrangements to this effect would be easier in bilateral or multilateral schools; where, for example, a Grammar School and a Technical School are working together under a bilateral arrangement, it should be possible for technical pupils to benefit from the Modern Language instruction, or even to have special courses designed for them, by the Grammar School specialists. These might have been the teachers responsible for the original basic two-year course, and they would then be in a position to adapt and expand the basic instruction to meet the special needs of technical pupils. In both bilateral and multilateral schools, alike during the Common Course and afterwards, the principle of 'setting' according to ability and achievement would have to be rigorously applied, for otherwise the system would be bound to result in loss and lowering of standards. Already in 1938 the Spens Report (p. 182, par. 40) proposed the Common Course up to the age of 13+ and the inclusion of one or even two foreign languages.

We cannot close this section without noting that many Grammar School teachers do not favour the 'Common Course'. They argue that, because some mistakes in classification at the age of 11+ are inevitable, it does not

follow that this classification is without merit. It is better, they think, to have to transfer a few unsuitable pupils from the Grammar School to the Technical School, or vice versa, than to risk the slow-down in the pace of the academic pupil that would inevitably result from the attempt to treat all pupils alike. They see, too, in the proposal some ideological doctrines at work that should have no place in educational theory and practice, and fear that the particular qualities of the best academic pupils that have proved so valuable in the spheres of culture, of the liberal professions and of administration may receive less than full attention in the sacred name of 'parity'.

THE NEW TECHNICAL SCHOOL

While the Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 9 ('The New Secondary Education') emphasizes the variety of ways in which the three types of secondary education can be integrated under one organization, such as that of the Multilateral School or the Campus School, and while it suggests that there are common elements in the curriculum of the first two years of all types of secondary education, it does not insist, however, on an absolutely common course for all secondary pupils during those years. It envisages quite definitely the disappearance of existing types of Junior Technical Schools in which the age of admission is 13 and the duration of the course about three years, and their replacement by the Technical High School adumbrated by the Spens Report and to be known as the Technical Secondary School. For this school children would be specially selected at the age of 11, the length of the course being four or five years, with a possibility of continued instruction after this stage. We shall now consider Modern Language teaching in such schools as a problem quite separate from that of such teaching in the common school.

SHOULD LANGUAGES BE TAUGHT IN TECHNICAL SCHOOLS?

It is contended that a Technical School Course must provide a general secondary education of which the essential elements must not be distorted by the vocational attitude. None the less, it will not be generally denied that the Local Authorities will tend to establish types of Technical Schools relevant to local industries, and that parents who elect to send their children to them (and parental choice will have to be regarded) will continue to do so with the definite objective of providing their children with employment, locally or elsewhere, in the industry concerned. The vocational content, even if not predominant until the later part of the course, will increase progressively and will imply the exclusion (perhaps from the start) of certain subjects studied in the Grammar School; or at the very least there will be a difference in the emphasis laid on these subjects. Among them languages will be the most obvious. So great is the variety of occupations that determine bias in Technical Schools, that the amount of language instruction in them may vary from zero to an amount not less than that undertaken in Grammar Schools. As in the past, the new Technical Schools will be mainly concerned, on their vocational side, with engineering, building and clerical occupations; to these we may add art, home training, agriculture, and mining. However, merely to ask ourselves in which of these spheres a knowledge of Modern Languages would be a useful asset would not be sufficient. We must also ask ourselves whether the study of a foreign language is an essential or a valuable part of the general education that is claimed to be the first function of these schools.

UTILITARIAN VALUE IN ADVANCED WORK

To this question there are several replies. There is first of all the contention of those who affirm that the standard

of general intelligence of Technical pupils is no less than that of Grammar School pupils, that many of them are capable of higher education after the completion of their secondary course and, in fact, may proceed to Degree courses. The value to these of a knowledge of Modern Languages is not disputed. The ability to read foreign technical journals and proceedings without waiting for them to be translated, the ability to make contact with technicians of foreign countries, or the possibility of taking up employment in foreign countries are all advanced as reasons for the study of languages by Technical pupils from quite an early age; while, for those who are to proceed to a Degree, knowledge of a foreign language is required, not only at the matriculation stage, but usually in the Degree Examinations also.

THE ORDINARY TECHNICAL PUPIL

But even if Matriculation or Advanced Courses in a Technical College or a University will be only for the comparative few, the general reasons given in Chapters I and II of this book apply with as much force in the case of Technical pupils as in that of Grammar School pupils. Quite apart from the practical advantages which might accrue to those pupils (e.g. commercial pupils) in whose future occupations a knowledge of foreign languages is regarded as of immediate value, there is no reason why Technical pupils should not enjoy the educational and cultural advantages inherent in language studies. Of course, just as in Grammar Schools, a certain proportion of Technical pupils may be unable to benefit greatly from language studies; but linguistic ability is neither limited to the Grammar School nor absent from the Modern School, and there are a large number of Technical pupils who have the ability to profit either from general language courses or from courses adapted to their special interests.

Research by Dr. Earle, reported at the 1947 British Association Meetings at Dundee, showed that, while, of children selected to do two foreign languages, all of those with low scores for practical ability had succeeded, of those with high scores for practical ability, only three out of ten were not doing successfully. The same general result was obtained with children selected to do one foreign language. If this means anything, it means that, among the pupils of the technical type, a large percentage are capable of profiting by language study and in the interests of their general education should not be debarred from such benefits.

NO DIFFERENTIATION IN EARLY STAGES

The Spens Report (p. 275) insists, as we have said, that the new Technical Schools should provide a curriculum for pupils between the ages of 11+ and 13+ of a character broadly similar to that of the curriculum in other types of secondary schools. It adds decisively: 'A foreign language would of course be included.' Pamphlet No. 9 is by no means so decided and merely opines: 'The curriculum will perhaps include the beginnings of a foreign language' (p. 58). Further, the Spens Report, speaking of the curriculum as a whole, recognizes that a somewhat different approach might be necessary in the Technical School, but insists that this difference should not be 'carried so far as to preclude the transfer of any pupil at the age of 13+ to or from an ordinary Grammar School'. We have shown that in a Common Course there would in language work be no differentiation at all, except as far as 'setting' affected the situation; but, even if there is no Common Course, owing to early Technical School segregation, we may reasonably suggest that it is important, at least in the first two years, not to differentiate the Technical Course in a language from the parallel course in a Grammar School.

Any proposed differentiation of method and content between the Grammar School approach and the Technical School approach as a whole might conceivably bear on the following points:—

- (a) the amount of grammar taught;
- (b) specialized vocabulary;
- (c) the amount of translation into English;
- (d) translation into the foreign language and Free Composition;
- (e) choice of reading matter.

It is conceivable that Technical School pupils continuing their studies *after the first years* and not preparing for an External Examination in Languages might, unlike the academic pupil, concentrate in the later stages on reading—the matter being largely of a technical or semi-technical nature. There would obviously be no urgent need for these to write French or German compositions, as must those who have an External Examination in view. Since, however, most modern methods of instruction largely avoid translation exercises and Free Composition in the early stages and concentrate on the simplest constructions and commonest vocabulary only, and since, in addition, at this stage the pupil, having done little or no technical work, requires few technical terms even in English, there is in the first two years no real case for differentiating his foreign language course from that of his Grammar School coeval. (We have already suggested that, where the Technical School was not a separate entity but a side of a multi-lateral or bilateral school, the teaching in the separate departments might not only be parallel but interlocked and advantageously ‘setted’.) Force is given to this contention by the insistence of Pamphlet No. 9 that ‘the total amount of time given directly to vocational subjects up to about the age of 16 should certainly be no more than the total that was normal during the full course of a junior

technical school' (p. 59). This means that vocational and technical subjects can be largely postponed to the later years of the course, leaving the general subjects, including languages, free unbiased play during the first two years. During this period, it should be possible to sort out the pupils whose technical aptitude is marked, and the further education of these in languages will depend on the vocation chosen.

THE THIRD YEAR AND AFTER: A SECOND LANGUAGE?

The Third Year is thus the first point at which real differentiation in language studies might take place. Dealing with this year, the Ministry Pamphlet No. 9 states: 'It may be possible to carry a foreign language further only in certain courses, for example some of the commercial courses' (p. 58). This statement is vague and unsatisfactory. In the first place, only one foreign language seems to be envisaged. This may not only be inadequate in a worth-while commercial course, but a real deprivation to a large number of pupils: for we have shown that there are many who, though not interested in the full discipline of academic language studies, yet possess a linguistic ability worthy of cultivation. It is a common experience of teachers who have worked at Evening Institutes to find there students who could have made excellent progress in languages in their youth, had they had opportunities for full-time studies. They are obliged eventually to take up these studies later in life, when they have little time at their disposal, and under the far from ideal conditions prevailing in Evening Institutes. As a result many good linguists are lost to commerce and to the nation. A good foundation laid in the Technical (Commercial) School might remedy this. We, therefore, suggest that capable commercial pupils should have an opportunity of studying two of the three languages, French, Spanish, German, the second

language being begun in the Third (or, possibly, the Second) Year. Moreover, Technical pupils in scientific and engineering departments, who are likely to matriculate and continue their studies to the higher level envisaged on p. 57 of the Pamphlet, should most certainly continue at least one language throughout the remainder of the course to the standard required by the examining body.

UTILITY

At this point, too, we must remember that pupils of certain special subjects such as Cookery, Hotel Management, Hairdressing, Dressmaking, and Millinery often find a knowledge of French very useful not only during their training but also when they have started on careers in high-grade establishments. These should continue to receive regular instruction in the subject throughout their course, and from the Third Year onwards the emphasis may be shifted to the acquirement of a technical vocabulary, while general oral work and especially everyday conversation should receive a full share of attention.

THE OTHERS—OPTIONAL LANGUAGE STUDY

Considering now the remainder of our pupils, we agree with the many teachers who think that, on practical, social and international grounds, a good case can be made out for continuing to develop reading ability, and perhaps also conversational ability, in pupils who will not continue their technical education beyond the age of 15 or 16 and who do not require languages in their future career. Surely those pupils who desire out of interest to continue such work should not be deprived of the opportunity. It may well be that, during the later years of the course, a certain number of optional subjects could be available, as the whole of the time is not to be spent on technical subjects, and languages, treated either as a full discipline or in a manner modified to suit particular

groups, might appear among the options. Indeed, the Spens Report (pp. 275-6) recommends the continuance of a foreign language right through the school for all pupils capable of benefiting by it, but suggests neither any differentiation in the course nor the provision of optional courses. It may be noted also that the same report indicates a preference for German: this view, although endorsed without hesitation by a few Technical Schools, will not be supported by all educationists.

PROSPECT

The half-hearted references to Modern Languages in Pamphlet 9 may be intended to foreshadow a departure from the position in existing Junior Technical Schools, where generally one Modern Language at least is taken in a great variety of courses, often compulsorily, and where frequently a second Modern Language may be taken up optionally. Practice in these schools varies considerably and will be likely to do so in the new schools, but it is hoped that the value of the new courses will not be arbitrarily lessened by a rigid uniform restriction of facilities for Modern Language learning. It may reasonably be expected, however, that, where utilitarian value can be proved or where a combination of utilitarian and cultural values emerges (for example, as a background to studies in art, to the printing trade, to social studies, to preparation for the public services, and above all for overseas trade and salesmanship), language studies will maintain themselves firmly in Technical Schools. Some of the uncertainties of the present position are due to the still vaguely defined aims of the newer types of schools.

THE TEACHER

While the teachers of languages in the Technical Schools have frequently the same qualifications, training and background as those of Grammar Schools (and, as we have

shown, may in some cases be the same persons), there is a distinct tendency to widen the field of recruitment, so as to include teachers less formally trained who have come into the service from industry, from commerce or from the armed forces. These are frequently capable and valuable members of the staff, whose practical knowledge of the conditions and manner in which the languages will ultimately be employed by the pupils, adds reality and concreteness to the work. In Secondary Commercial Schools, especially, it is becoming not uncommon to find language teachers who have had considerable business experience and to whom the technical terms involved are a first-hand acquisition, a real advantage over the usual arts graduate who has to acquire them artificially at second hand. Though correspondents stress the fact that technical knowledge is not essential to the language teacher in all technical courses, it is not denied that it may be a valuable asset in many, and occasionally indispensable. For while the language teacher should be a representative of culture in the Technical School, he will not only gain in prestige by meeting his pupils on their own ground, but his knowledge of the terms and processes of a given occupation will be a valuable guide to him in the selection of vocabulary and of suitable reading matter.

MATERIAL

In this respect he will not be greatly helped by textbooks. There are available, of course, a large variety of books on commercial correspondence and of commercial readers, in all the languages likely to be taught in the schools, and there are also some readers in purely scientific subjects; but, except in the catering industry, there are no special Language Courses adapted to the needs of each and every trade. The instructor is bound to use ordinary courses and readers to teach the general structure of the

language (this is in any case inevitable in the 'Common Course' organization). When this stage is completed, the necessity for a special vocabulary and for special reading matter applicable to the bias of the pupil becomes apparent. For this purpose the teacher must resort to trade journals, scientific and technical magazines, and general newspapers published in the countries concerned, trade catalogues and technical dictionaries, and consult with his colleagues in the technical departments as to the most useful terms and phrases to be mastered.

DEVICES

Once he has collected his material he may use a variety of devices in teaching it. He may, for example, prepare lists of words logically arranged under topics, duplicate and distribute them to the pupils to recognize, learn and use. Or he may teach them orally in the classroom and write them on the blackboard for the pupils to copy into notebooks. More advanced pupils may be set to find out, from such sources as we have described, the terms applicable to a given topic. If the teacher is a reasonably good draughtsman or can get drawings made by a technical colleague, he can assemble a series of these to illustrate the whole range of the vocabulary required. Variety in vocabulary teaching can be obtained by getting the pupils to point out and name the objects or parts of objects shown in the diagrams, or to describe the working of these objects in the language studied. The pupils, too, could draw these diagrams, inserting the technical terms. For reading matter of a technical nature, an ideal method, which may one day be available once more, is to supply the pupils with little handbooks on scientific and technical subjects written in the foreign language and intended for young people in the country of origin. Until these are available, all that the teacher can do is to duplicate suitable passages for

the pupils to read and translate accurately into English.

THE COMMERCE PUPIL

The main difficulty with commercial pupils is their eagerness to get quickly on to commercial correspondence. This results from their mistaken impression that the ordinary forms of the foreign language will be of little use to them, and that they must at all costs acquire a great deal of commercial jargon and master the abbreviations all too frequently employed. As in the case of English teaching for commercial students, pupils must be impressed, even for the realization of the utilitarian aims that are uppermost in their minds, with the importance of obtaining an accurate and grammatical command of the written and spoken language before they plunge fully into trade technicalities. There is no reason, however, why some of the simpler terms should not be used in fairly early stages of letter-writing or other forms of composition, provided that their practical application is fully understood. A certain amount of co-operation between the teachers of Commerce, English and Modern Languages would ensure that the commercial language was not being learned in too artificial and unreal a way, or too early. The language teacher in a Commerce Course is fortunate in having at his disposal a vast variety of courses in letter-writing, in commercial reading, and in descriptive and historical background, besides journals published in this and in the foreign country.

CULTURE

It must not be assumed, however, that utilitarian motives are the only ones behind language studies in Technical Schools. Both technical and commercial pupils welcome the reading of good stories and playlets, as a change from their more specialized work, and because their improved general education has made them more amen-

able to cultural influences. It is essential, therefore, that, however simple the texts, they should be *good of their kind* and that inferior or crude adventure tales should be avoided; pupils must not become derisive of the pabulum put before them, and this is especially true of technical pupils who may never attain to the very best reading material during their school career. Our aim here must be to stimulate the pupil to want to read for himself and to keep up his knowledge of the language when his course is over. A perennial source of increased interest may be tapped by giving occasional epidiascope or lantern talks on the foreign country, its people, institutions, history, art and industry, while simple accounts of current events abroad will always command eager attention, especially if the teacher can bring out the human interest of his story. It is possible to inspire something of international understanding and sympathy in technical pupils as in academic pupils by making the approach through their own particular interests.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The classroom need not be the only field for linguistic activity. It is suggested, for example, that technical pupils will readily join a Language Circle, particularly if a strong social element—facilitated greatly when the sexes are mixed, as they often are in Technical Schools—can be fostered. In a multilateral or bilateral school, technical, academic, and even ‘modern’ pupils could all benefit by membership of a common language club, where playlets might be performed, songs sung, games and competitions organized, and parties made up to see foreign films when these are available. Activities of this kind may compensate somewhat for the undeniable fact that pupils at Technical Schools and sometimes at Commercial Schools, who may not have to submit to an Oral Examination in a language,

show a tendency to resent an insistence on oral work in class. A large and successful language club is a useful adjunct to a Grammar School; in other types of secondary school, it is more than that, it is an essential.

EXAMINATIONS

Preparation for examinations in the Grammar School is discussed in Chapter V of this book. So far as the School Certificate is concerned and as the 'Ordinary' papers in the 'General Certificate of Education' will be concerned, the problems are identical in Grammar and Technical Schools and need not be restated. There have been from time to time suggestions that for commercial students (and perhaps for technical students) the requirements of a Certificate language paper might be so varied as to include passages for translation into English of matter relevant to their bias. This might be feasible so far as commerce is concerned, but it would hardly be possible to include in a public examination passages for translation applicable to all the possible courses provided by Technical Schools. For students not going on to more advanced university studies, an Internal Examination, such as some Technical Schools and Colleges have initiated, or more preferably the examinations of some non-university examining body such as the Royal Society of Arts, Chamber of Commerce, etc., will serve the purpose of providing an incentive and a standard to be aimed at, as well as a yardstick for the use of employers. An Oral Test should be an essential feature of such examinations.

Where languages are taken as optional subjects and External Examinations, or other formal examinations, are not compulsory, the increased freedom of the teacher is regarded by some correspondents as some compensation for the relatively unspectacular position held by language teachers in Technical Schools. In some cases, however,

teachers complain that the absence of an examination tends to lower the prestige of the subject, and that their own resulting inability to record successes in External Examinations militates against their prospects of advancement in the profession.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps even more than the Modern School, the new Technical Secondary School is destined to undergo great changes and to develop on a great variety of lines. The large number of trades and professions to be catered for is bound to impose a great range of patterns, and there should be rich opportunities for experiment and research, in which language teachers will no doubt play their part. The new techniques in language teaching so developed, as new aims are advanced and new problems faced, may in their turn profoundly affect the methods in vogue in other types of secondary education; while co-operation and competition between all the types, now regarded as being on a strict parity of esteem, should be a source of mutual enrichment and of increased value to the modern world.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NON-ACADEMIC PUPIL IN GRAMMAR AND MODERN SCHOOLS

THE so-called 'unlinguistic' pupil in Grammar Schools has often been thought to need special treatment; many teachers, indeed, would have no truck with him after the second or third year, and would confine him to less intellectual pursuits, or else fashion for him a course in which foreign life and institutions, described in English, would largely supplant the study of the language.

With the advent of the Secondary Modern School, this controversy has sharpened. Official policy suggests the belief that pupils of quite low academic endowment, especially in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the town, can profitably study, say, French or Spanish. Only time can show whether this opinion is well-founded, or whether it derives from the doctrine of 'parity of esteem.' But there can be no doubt that this extension of language teaching will depend for any success on satisfactory planning. Clearly the need exists for some re-orientation of method, not only in the Modern, but also in the Grammar School.

What is an 'unlinguistic' pupil? Some say that quite a third of those in the Grammar Schools are without special aptitude; and in a Modern School, whether prognostic tests be used or whole streams be set to study a language, the proportion will certainly be higher. Briefly, such pupils, like other unacademic types, may be expected: (*a*) to possess poor memories; (*b*) to find it hard to concentrate; (*c*) to be weak at co-ordinating brain and muscle and therefore at imitating sound; (*d*) to possess a certain inferiority complex, and (*e*) to lack incentive.

PRINCIPLES

To offset these disabilities, it is suggested that the following principles should be borne in mind:—

- (a) Poor memory, whether visual or auditory, should be aided by constant repetition: the course would contain numerous exercises, and vocabulary would increase very slowly from chapter to chapter. Back-work would be frequently tested, since new work effectively crowds out the old.
- (b) To maintain interest, lessons should be 'broken up'; there should be much education through activity, competitive exercises and games.
- (c) To improve the quality of oral work, there would again be much repetition, many pronunciation drills, both individual and general. At the same time, it is possible that undue striving for oral perfection will discourage, and it may, therefore, be desirable, where necessary, to consider fluency as important as accuracy.
- (d) To give confidence, the pace would be slow, grammar would be simplified, exercises would be designed to encourage and not, through excessive use of the red pencil, to dismay; use of the Direct Method would not be slavish.
- (e) To provide incentive, everything possible should be done to show the practical value of the foreign language, and to ensure that it has some connection with the pupil's own environment.

PRACTICE

Translating principles into practice, we would make the following recommendations:—

- (a) 'Non-linguistic' pupils should work only from courses that have their particular requirements in mind; reading material should be based on some reliable scheme of word frequency; exercises should

be designed to test past as well as present work.

- (b) As far as possible, no lesson should be *entirely* devoted to reading, or grammar, or writing (though a pupil preparing for an Examination, driven by the fear of failure, may not need this stimulus); reading should consist of short stories, rather than of full-length works; the teacher's voice should not be heard too often—where possible, for instance, he could get certain pupils to ask the questions for him.

The following activities can be practised with advantage:—

- i. Play-readings and dramatization of stories (children will enjoy even learning by heart for such a purpose).
- ii. Singing.
- iii. Drawing (e.g. vocabulary pictures of ships, cars etc.).
- iv. The compilation of scrap-books containing pictures, stamps, newspaper cuttings relating to the foreign country (the principle being to bring the language into line with the pupil's own interests).
- v. Co-operative group work, notably in the sphere of composition. (See also Chapter VI, Section VII, Project Work.)
- vi. Reading by the Dalton plan, children being encouraged to borrow reading material from the school library (preferably with word lists) and to make their own vocabularies.
- vii. Conversational 'free-for-alls', in which the class breaks up into small groups for talking in the foreign language, the teacher mingling with the various groups.

Much work, both grammatical and conversational, can be put over by competitions (putting boys

against the girls or one section of the class against another), games, quizzes, brains trusts, etc.

- (c) It has been suggested that the 'unlinguistic' pupil who finds a language such as French difficult to pronounce (as he not infrequently finds his own), should not, on this account, be hindered from acquiring oral fluency. Every effort should be made to see that sets are as small as possible, so that the spoken language may be practised individually and not within the security of the group. Although it is sometimes thought that the 'unlinguistic' pupil has some countervailing skill in oral work; that (in the words of one correspondent) he registers sound patterns fairly well, but cannot transfer these to visual images; that the ability to speak calls for mimicry rather than analytical skill or academic attainment—it is still rare under present conditions that the 'C' stream produces more than glib inaccuracy. In this connection, the use of phonetics, as creating an additional complication, is not necessarily to be recommended.
- (d) In order that a satisfactory pace may be achieved, a given year should be 'setted'. It is fatal, in our opinion, that good and bad children should learn a language together: the former, like the money in Gresham's Law, tend to drive the latter out of circulation. That no inferiority complex should arise, the difference of treatment as between the sets would be one of method rather than of content.

As the present school grammar courses often contain much unnecessary material (some would eliminate the French subjunctive, for example, at the 'Ordinary' Examination level), a simplified or 'skeleton' grammar should be used. Grammatical terms would need to be clearly and simply explained

(the language teacher would collaborate with the English staff for this purpose), since nothing exasperates the pupil more than to be constantly pulled up, especially over usages not found in his own language. Comparison should often be made with the mother tongue, understanding of which is thereby increased. In certain cases, grammar can be taught inductively, i.e. by letting the pupil build up his own rules from given examples.

Among exercises that discourage are those of the 'active' type, e.g. free composition and translation into French. The former should be largely replaced by reproduction of texts read and stories told, or by description of pictures, with a plan or outline for help. Such work may include passages learned by heart. The more such work can be prepared, the less time the harassed teacher will take to correct it. Translation into French will not as a rule be required, except by those preparing for External Examinations. Dictation should be prepared in advance, and easy comprehension questions frequently set. Marks should err on the high side, comments be friendly. In short, the pupil should be praised for what he does right, not castigated for what he does wrong.

The Direct Method cannot be fully implemented; any unusual word is better translated, any grammatical usage is better explained, in English. With 'unlinguistic' children, the pure Direct Method leaves too many problems unsolved, and sweeps forward too rapidly; and translation into English at least of occasional phrases may give a valuable sense of achievement. 'Comprehension' questions, following on translation, give at least an impression of Direct Methods.

- (e) The answer to the unexpressed *À quoi bon?* of these pupils will be found by demonstrating the link between the language and their own experience. To this end, the business of the classroom should, as far as possible, be conducted in the foreign language; its use might well be compulsory at certain times by the pupils; they, however dull, can often understand a considerable amount of it when spoken. The presence of an 'assistant' is invaluable, as are gramophone courses spoken by Frenchmen, radio lessons, and foreign visits. Of all such aids, however, correspondence is perhaps the most valuable, as it promotes rivalry with the foreigner, and brings the latter within the confines of the imagination. Pupils are also interested in the similarities that exist between foreign words and words in their own language.

The Teacher

Lastly, it can be imagined that a particular type of teacher will be required to discharge this task successfully. He should certainly have plenty of vigour, being prepared to be constantly on his feet, so as to attract his pupils' attention. He will be loth to punish and will need a robust sense of humour. He will need to stage-manage his lessons with particular care, patience and sympathy. He will need clear-cut aims: he must allot to speaking, reading and writing their due priorities. It will be useful if he is a natural actor and, devoid of self-consciousness, throws himself into everything he reads. Above all, he must be enthusiastic, fighting for his subject where, as may occur in Modern Schools, some would cast it from the syllabus or reduce the necessary daily lesson to two or three periods per week.

Granted these various qualities, which might seem to merit a greater reward than the average teacher's salary, he may well make his subject both popular and educationally valuable.

The above suggestions, as we have said, will be found to apply particularly to Modern Schools and to the lower streams in Grammar Schools. Even in the upper streams of the latter—unless these consist exclusively of those rare phenomena, the born linguists, who absorb a language merely by hearing it spoken and by reading it, and take to the Direct Method as a duck to water—our principles may not be without application.

EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

In the new examination for the 'General Certificate of Education,' it is believed that the minimum standard for success may ultimately approximate to that of the old School Certificate 'Credit.' From the beginning, the standard will be somewhat raised. To 'unlinguistic' pupils in Grammar Schools, this is a serious matter, for our experience suggests that of these pupils only some 40-45 per cent. have been able to achieve 'Credits,' although another 25-30 per cent. have been able to 'Pass.' As for the typical Secondary Modern School, the minimum age requirement will prevent (as it is, in fact, intended to prevent) the pupils from sitting for the papers while still at school.

It seems reasonable to hope that many moderate linguists among Grammar School pupils will remain at school long enough to attempt the new standard with good prospect of success. For those, from whatever schools, who leave earlier, we can only hope that they will continue their studies in evening classes, or revive their knowledge through travel. The teacher, so far as he can, will make them wish to do so: the degree of his success remains to be seen.

CHAPTER IX

THOSE WHO START LATE

THERE is general reluctance among teachers to begin a new language in the Sixth Form. Most of the pupils who so begin are either scientists who need a reading knowledge of German, or others who need Latin for purposes of university qualification. The latter demand, which some, but not all, Modern Language teachers strongly oppose, lies mainly beyond the scope of this book.

The argument put forward against learning a new language to the standard of the 'Advanced' Certificate or of the University Scholarship—or even of the old 'Subsidiary' papers—is that the demand is greatly excessive. It is far too much to expect a pupil to learn in two years, in a new language, what it has taken him six or seven years to learn in his first language. It takes far more than two years to acquire an adequate grasp of grammar, vocabulary, and of the spoken tongue, to read Set Books intelligently, and to establish a sound literary background. If it is argued that some pupils succeed in the attempt, it is replied that very few can do so; that the others must be sacrificed to them; and that a school which has the staff necessary for such an undertaking can surely save much of time-consuming drudgery in the Sixth Form by introducing the language in the Fourth Form. In most cases, the Advanced Course enriches all the learning that precedes it, and gives real significance to knowledge : for this reason, it is largely lost endeavour merely to learn the new language to the old 'Subsidiary' standard, when this time could be spent on those advanced studies, incomparably more rewarding, which are the true purpose of Sixth Form courses. Thus

there is on the whole little serious language study that begins in the Sixth Form; yet what there is of it, in German and Spanish alike, is in fact of the very highest order.

This result derives from the reluctance to begin with any pupils but the best: severe selection nearly always ensures that the learners are of high linguistic capacity. In those schools which have no course in the Sixth Form for beginners in German or Spanish, it is the clever and obstinate pupil who persuades some master to supervise his work, often without recognition in the timetable. In other schools, where a regular course for beginners exists, all save able linguists are usually either discouraged or plainly rejected. With such able pupils gifted with unusual energy, very gratifying results are often obtained. Open scholarships are not infrequently won by these pupils; and in those schools where a persistent and talented pupil is allowed to join a class that has studied the language for some three years, it is often found that at the 'Advanced' or 'Scholarship' level he has outstripped them all.

By no means the worst results are obtained by individual pupils who persuade a teacher to give supervision, organize a course of study, and leave them to work. These are nearly always gifted pupils, and, if the library is adequate, the purely academic side of the study is readily mastered in spite of the apparent difficulties. The greatest problem is that of the oral work, without which, despite all academic attainment, languages are appreciated but partially and their lyric poetry not at all. Here language records, supported perhaps by wireless programmes, can be of the greatest assistance. One correspondent makes the point that this untrammelled study, if skilfully directed, can be among the most valuable of the young student's experiences, and that in fact it is often easier to supervise closely one student in a weekly talk of twenty minutes than a whole but ill-assorted class regularly taught. This

study is makeshift only on the surface. It demands much from the pupil and much from the teacher, yet the latter is seldom too occupied to let the student profit from his own experience in study.

Regular instruction, provided that the class is able and homogeneous, may not be easier, but is in some ways simpler. If weaklings make a beginning, they must be sacrificed. To the others, oral work in German, and especially in Spanish, is very much easier than in the early days of French learning, and, on the whole, the problem of spoken mastery is far less pressing than might appear. Even the basic grammar of German and Spanish can be acquired sufficiently to enable texts to be read quite early; once the grammar has been assimilated, the set texts can be studied and with them the cultural background. The greatest stumbling-block is the acquisition of vocabulary; too often the set texts, and even the wider reading, call for very burdensome work with the dictionary, and must be used as quarries for vocabulary. Otherwise, (and especially after the first year), the study of the language is carried on in exactly the same way as other language learning.

It is agreed that study of this kind demands hard work and perseverance and that the price paid so to learn a language and to read some of its literature is high even for a clever boy. Nevertheless, many teachers do not consider the price prohibitive, and there are even some who prefer this intensive method with selected pupils to what they think the duller task of starting earlier in the school with all comers and proceeding to the same stage by a process of attrition. It remains certain that good brains are needed to learn a language quickly: unless the ability is forthcoming, it is almost time and labour wasted to attempt to teach an advanced knowledge of any language in two or three years.

THE 'SCIENCE SIXTH'

In spite of the increasing importance attached to the natural sciences and the demands of many universities for a reading knowledge of scientific French and German, comparatively little of such reading is done in the Sixth Forms. The teaching to a few Sixth-Form boys of the elements of Scientific German is totally opposed by many teachers, for the very good reason that it is impossible to learn a language well and quickly in an odd period or two a week of desultory study by uninterested students. There is, moreover, a strong conviction that this distinction between 'German' and 'Scientific German' is largely spurious, even if the aim is to provide only a reading knowledge of the language. There is very frequently a shortage of staff, and students are often so reluctant to make the necessary effort that this course has been rarely begun, and often suspended. Where the elements of the language have already been mastered, as often happens in French, the scientific language can be a rewarding study, and enough can readily be done to enable Sixth-Formers to lecture to the French Society on scientific subjects. But this is impossible with a language begun in the Sixth with a maximum of two periods a week for study. It is quite clear that, unless this scientific language study receives adequate treatment in the timetable and perhaps a scientific paper in the 'Advanced' Certificate Examination, either the present state of half-hearted teaching and bored learning will continue or the whole idea will lapse.

There are two methods of approaching this problem of Scientific German for beginners in the Sixth Form. One is to take an up-to-date Scientific German Reader and to give the elements of grammar—word order, plurals, and verbs in the third person only. By this means it is possible to reach a passive reading ability fairly soon, and it depends entirely upon the students to solidify by wider

reading this thin grammatical content. The results aimed at are not high, but at least, if the Reader is good, they constitute a systematic course. None the less, the objections to this system are considerable: one correspondent would be reluctant to place himself in the hands of a physician whose knowledge of his ailment was derived from German monographs read with such limited linguistic equipment. On the other hand, it is very difficult to do much more in a Sixth Form, for the other method of instruction—the teaching of a sound grammatical background with normal vocabulary—leaves no time for teaching the scientific jargon. The latter is indeed easy to learn, but requires, in German at least, some considerable application.

On the whole, it is probably better not to embark on Scientific German unless there is time adequate to work through a systematic German Course, scientific or not, with texts and a sufficient grammar, or to use a grammar and good reading texts. But this plan pre-supposes some linguistic ability, and an acquaintance with the natural sciences does not connote any linguistic excellence that would make thorough study unnecessary. If the language is to be done well, then proper facilities must be given. Until these facts are realized, all language learning of this nature will remain inadequate.

LANGUAGES IN EVENING CLASSES

If we are bound to say that, in the vast majority of Evening Schools, language teaching is not very successful, it is well that our statement should not be misunderstood. In face of the immense difficulties, it is pleasant to find so much enthusiasm and such gratifying results. The endeavours of many evening students are humbling to those who have studied under the best of conditions. Serious study, properly a full-time occupation, is not lightly to be undertaken by those who have worked all day, snatched a hasty

meal, and hurried to the Evening School. Let it be said that Education Authorities are generous to these students—indeed, more generous than most students realize, though not more generous than many students deserve. Many students attend Evening Classes as often as four times a week, and are expected to do their due preparation. It is true that only a few reach their goal, which in the provinces is frequently Matriculation or its very good rival, the Royal Society of Arts Diploma. Such achievements are of the highest merit : they would gratify us yet more if we could feel sure that success always brings rewards commensurate with the effort demanded.

The teaching of languages offers special difficulties. Students want to learn languages for widely varied reasons : some need a language for a professional examination ; some want to learn a little French because at school they never had the opportunity to do so ; some would like to brush up their half-forgotten school knowledge ; some wish to learn a language for commercial reasons ; some are professional linguists who want to learn another language ; perhaps the majority want to travel or study a language merely for amusement, as an intelligent alternative to cross-word puzzles. This great variety of aims offers some difficulties, though rather fewer than might be supposed. Variety of ability raises problems far greater, and, indeed, almost insoluble ; this is especially the case in French, since almost all who begin that language are without experience of linguistic study. Now classes tend to become rigid units, and transfers are rare, except perhaps in the very largest towns. Thus the random group of students can develop no kind of homogeneity : the ablest soon feel frustrated, and the non-linguists feel incapable of keeping abreast. Other difficulties are equally potent. Adults cannot always guarantee attendance ; overtime and bad weather can sometimes claim entire classes : such troubles

are lessened rather than overcome by careful planning of the course, with constant revision. Students despair when they have an examination in view and are too tired to study; at the best, some have barely a moment to themselves. Classes almost always dwindle after six or seven weeks, and frequently, after Christmas, the course has to be suspended because the attendance is too small to justify the giving of the tuition: in large towns classes can sometimes be telescoped, but in smaller places the classes cease to exist, and the able linguists find themselves again forlorn.

Now in two terms of some 24 hours each, there is little that a teacher can do except give advice, state the grammar with crystal clarity, suggest reading texts and gramophone records, and convince the students that all depends on them and on the work they do for themselves. If any serious language study is to be done, there is little time for 'background' and for songs, while long intervals between lessons make oral work very difficult. Language rooms and aids to atmosphere are hard to come by; conditions can be very depressing. On the other hand, the standard of teaching is usually very high. Most of it is performed by Grammar School masters, although there are, especially in London, very many native teachers; if the methods of the latter are usually poorer, yet their appeal is often greater than that of English teachers. It would be a gross injustice to apply to the Evening Class the academic yardstick of the Grammar School. Very considerable successes are sometimes obtained; when all the difficulties are taken into account, there can be no doubt that in general the results are as high as they could be under the circumstances.

A course in French usually lasts for two or three years. In its later stages, reading of even the more difficult texts can be attempted, there can be a great deal of oral work,

and grammar can be revised almost entirely in the language. It may even be possible to take new grammar in the language; but this certainly assumes thorough teaching beforehand, lacking which the risk of confusion would be far too great. Examination candidates usually form a separate class. They are forced to acquire a grasp of the grammatical elements of the language—a 'Certificate' knowledge; and all too often this leaves very little time even for the elementary practice of those aspects of Modern Language study which are more amusing, and perhaps more valuable. French is nearly always the language selected for examination study. This is in some ways a pity, for 'Certificate' Spanish or German might well leave more time for reading and talk than does French with its mass of grammatical niceties.

Occasionally, even in smaller towns, there is a flourishing two-year course in Dutch or in Russian, stimulated, perhaps only temporarily, by interest in world affairs or by the exchange of parties of children. In German or Spanish, unfortunately, courses are frequently limited to one year, because there are not enough students to justify a second. This makes the task of adequate teaching all the more exacting.

The teacher must find an acceptable textbook, give the grammatical essence of the language, instil a reasonably accurate pronunciation, and, at the same time as he imparts this mass of knowledge, he must seek to arouse interest enough to lead the competent and the keen to read privately when tuition is no longer available. Finally, students may be tested by Local Examining Boards. The standards approved by such Boards provide a target for ambition, and success by any of the students is gratifying. Many learners use these tests purely as a stimulus to precise knowledge: if the value of accuracy is the only lesson that they learn, it is perhaps just as valuable

as any linguistic knowledge which the teacher has tried to give them.

All these problems, and many others, faced the British Army when it tried to outline an elementary knowledge of French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Arabic in its *From Scratch* series of textbooks. The methods adopted might well prove of considerable assistance in the one-year courses of the Evening Institutes. This experiment, of course, was called into being as a result of the war to meet the demand for a quick course in the spoken language, and both its aims and its matter had to differ from the Army's very systematic advanced courses. The *From Scratch* series was devised by a committee free from illusions as to what could be done and fully alive to the mass of obstacles certain to arise in practice. These difficulties were greater than those of Evening Institutes, where at least there is nearly always enthusiasm from the beginning. The Army had often to cater for an exceedingly mixed company of listless learners on active service; and their study, pursued under makeshift conditions, was subject to the multitude of interruptions that come from military duties. In such circumstances, the onus fell on the teachers, who had to have a genuine talent for stimulation, and frequently for organization too. Further, great professional ability was needed, for not the least of the task was to avoid both the schoolroom and the barrack-square atmosphere; and, in fact, the spirit of the approach came as a sharp surprise to many of the earlier classes.

Against this background, the series *From Scratch* was written. By the use of texts both sprightly and homely and of an excellent set of records, it attempted to teach a working knowledge of the language in 17 periods of two hours. While there was no insistence on grammatical detail, there was equally no pretence that progress could be easy. Relying on the keenness of beginners, the compilers packed the

first two lessons with matter which could scarcely be pruned further. In spite of the work involved, they insisted that progress must be perceptible by making each lesson a self-contained unit. Texts, dealing with the experiences of two soldiers in the foreign country, were sensible and interesting—a bullfight, a native marriage ceremony, a Russian communal farm, etc. New words were listed in the order of their appearance; the vocabulary amounted to some 800 words with a minimum word and phrase frequency of 11. Of set purpose, grammar was kept to a minimum, expressed as far as possible in non-technical language, and always subordinated to the texts. Stress was laid on the grammatical essence of the language, the pronoun, the adjective, the adverb, the verb in all its tenses. All was expressed as clearly as possible and as concisely as the deliberately limited aim would allow.

Pronunciation offered some difficulties, and, as an expedient, an imitative pronunciation was used. Direct Method instruction could hardly be attempted, but each lesson had its pronunciation exercises and its practice sentences for intonation. Grammar and textual interpretation were usually done in English, the answers to questions on the text in the language studied. The course contained three revision lessons. If few students reached the highest standards, none the less in some centres it was possible to organize many activities leading to a wider language study—plays, concerts (German songs were especially popular), lectures and social gatherings.

Clearly such a book and such a system, designed to be used under such conditions, demanded much both of teacher and of learner, and there is no claim that the course taught more than a fraction of what could have been taught with more time, with better facilities, and with selected pupils. Yet if only a fraction of the students persisted in learning to the level attained by those who

finally visited the centres—or even to a standard rather lower—the experiment remains most fruitful, and can hardly be neglected when Evening Class Courses are organized.

LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE AMERICAN ARMY

In their *Survey of Language Classes in the American Army Specialized Training Program*, the 'Commission on Trends in Education' of the Modern Language Association of America gave a critical but appreciative account of Modern Language teaching in the American Army. Although the writers pointedly insist that this work was carried out under most favourable conditions that can scarcely occur again, the entire system contains features of considerable interest and, perhaps, of general application.

It was early discovered that there were not in the American Armed Forces sufficient linguists to cover the needs, and therefore special schools of instruction were established. The object of the language instruction was to impart a command of the spoken language, that is, an adequate grasp of fluency and accuracy and the capacity to understand anything a native might say on normal topics. Reading and writing were to be subsidiary accomplishments. With these limited aims, and with the novel methods employed, nine months of study proved sufficient. The method, briefly, was to provide in each week three one-hour demonstrations on the backbone of the language—grammar, syntax, word-formation, pronunciation—and six two-hour drill sessions with a native drill-master. The demonstrations on the backbone of the language were planned so that all points in the essential structure of the language were presented in the order of the difficulty which they offered to English-speaking learners. The closely supervised drill sessions were to give intensive practice of the principles stated in the preceding structure

lessons. The amount of grammar learned varied from place to place and from language to language; yet it was always made clear to students that grammar was to be an auxiliary. Under these conditions the number of students in a group had to be restricted. In general the proportion was one senior instructor and four drill-masters for each assignment of 80 men; and no drill-master took more than ten men in a conversation period.

The students were usually men of linguistic ability. All those selected had done very well in the Army General Classification Test (of intelligence and aptitude); had proved efficiency in foreign languages; and had completed at least one year of college work. The supervisors and the all-important co-ordinator were professional teachers of languages. The drill-masters were native speakers, some of whom were quite raw to the task, and many of whom had reached America as a result of Hitler's persecution. To them fell the most important of the tasks. With very brief training, they had to deal with the purely conversational side of the work, and to teach the men to use in speech the words and the grammar so far learned. Although the material at the disposal of the men was of necessity very tenuous at first, the drill-masters were required to keep within its limits, and to avoid all grammatical explanation. They were called on to conduct from 18 to 24 hours of drill every week, and to serve as models to the students. These were clearly the key-men, and, in view of the subtlety and difficulty of their task, and of their lack of teaching experience, they had to be carefully supervised; it was found that without such constant watch they would not keep to their strict duty.

The drill-master always spoke at normal conversational speed. In the beginning, he had for each period a dialogue of some 30 sentences which he explained by word and gesture. For ten minutes there was chorus work in repeti-

tion and chorus work in reading the text; in the next ten minutes each man dealt with the text in person. Then the ten men split into five groups of two and conversed in the same room; by the babel thus intentionally created, it was found that auditory acuity was in fact increased. Soon this system of memory and mimicry ('mim-mem') could be replaced by improvised dialogues, short plays, scenes in factories, games, monologues; after a few months, speech contests, debates and discussions could be held. In all this the drill-master, by his skill and, not less, his tact, directed the proceedings; and all was kept geared to the grammatical introduction.

The grammar itself was not neglected. Usually it followed formal lines, although most of the instruction was carried on in the language as soon as this was practicable. Some teachers even tried to use the language on the first day, thus making the grammar lessons a further drill lesson in speech; in any case, this was readily done when the grammatical content of the lesson was exhausted. All the conventional methods of grammar teaching were used, but there was a strong tendency to avoid all translation into English, and to eliminate or postpone the rarer grammatical points in favour of spoken efficiency. For similar reasons, there was a constant effort to avoid all grammar teaching in the drill periods, as teachers tended to let more and more grammar intrude into this teaching unless a strict ban was imposed.

Hence model sentences and texts were devised for use both in grammar and drill periods. In the case of the rarer languages, these had to be improvised from start to finish. Usually the conversation was geared to the grammar, though some who doubted the wisdom of this preferred to gear the grammar to the drill, in spite of all the preparation thus made necessary. In any case, co-ordination between the two was essential to keep the drill-masters

within their bounds. The inevitable conflict between fluency and accuracy ended in a compromise: perhaps there was a slight extra stress on fluency, for it was found that accuracy developed with greater experience and wider reading.

Though reading was purely incidental to the course, it proved that intensive oral work accelerated the development of capacity to read. This was particularly true of Russian, where reading provided a mine of information and material for the persistently maintained oral work. Though translation into English was excluded, much translation into the foreign language was done in the formal grammar periods after the first few months: it was found again that the strenuous practice in the spoken language materially aided fluency in translation. Both reading and translation were naturally more difficult in the Oriental languages, but some classes began to use ideographs before the course ended.

Much work was done on vocabulary. Standard frequency counts, being derived entirely from written texts, proved inadequate: 'Gabel,' for instance, was lacking from one well-known German list. Thus vocabulary lists were frequently compiled by the instructors. The learning of detached vocabularies was found to be very unrewarding. In the later months many mechanical aids were introduced: gramophone records were widely used, as were short-wave wireless talks recorded on tape. As a rule, passive listening was not very successful, but in the Oriental languages, when supported by Romanized scripts, it served a good purpose. Wireless and telephone were seldom used, yet one institution aroused the derision of the inquiring committee by using a cathode-ray oscilloscope! On the whole, it was realized that no accumulation of artificial aids could supplant the all-important drill-masters.

It seems beyond doubt that the system was extremely successful, and the committee's praise is all the more convincing in view of the many criticisms of detail which they offered. It is recognized that much of the success was due to the teaching in very small groups of able linguists who enjoyed every facility to learn and, in the great majority of cases, a great desire to do so. Some of the early ideas were unworkable, and some institutions did not carry out the close supervision of drill-masters that was essential. Others set too high a value on fluency at the expense of accuracy, and others again reversed this emphasis. Nevertheless, in view of the wide programme—427 classes were instructed in 17 Western European and Oriental Languages—the committee emphatically concluded that the courses had not only succeeded in the short-term policy of imparting fairly fluent speech, but had succeeded beyond their main endeavour in accelerating reading facility, and perhaps in providing a few points of universal application.

CHAPTER X

THE TESTING OF ACHIEVEMENT

I. TESTS AND THEIR PURPOSE

(1) SOME balancing of accounts is imperative in every business, some stocktaking in every home, some scoring in every match, some testing in every school.

A school test may serve one or more of three aims : it may, in a given field, demonstrate the pupil's level of achievement to himself, to his teacher, or to some third party (head teacher, parent, prospective employer, etc.). Tests purely for purposes of research, in which the individual pupil may be of no importance, are outside the scope of this chapter.

(2) *Tests and the Pupil*

In some cases, our aim may be defeated by the pupil's lack of interest : a boy quite without interest in his work may be immune from the effects of a bad test result. But thanks to the interest taken in their work by nearly all teachers of Modern Languages, there are few such boys, and fewer such girls. Most pupils take note of marks awarded by their teachers, and account test marks more important than any given for ordinary exercises.

Further, to most pupils tests are highly stimulating. They are particularly so if accompanied, as often in terminal or half-yearly tests, by a certain degree of formality. (Great formality, of course, may defeat its own ends by frightening nervous pupils.) Many pupils use their brains in tests to better effect than at any other time. The teacher endeavours to cure the evil habits of such persistent dodgers of thought ; none the less it is well that at judicious

intervals they should receive a further stimulus. Revision previous to the test, inquiries after it with opportunities of repairing the defects revealed, and the test itself, frequently lead to definite gains of learning : just so a tennis-player may improve his game during a match or in the course of a tournament. Such ancillary advantages may well outweigh all other values of the test, and the teacher should derive from them such profit as he can.

(3) *Tests and the Head Teacher*

Tests have a certain analogy with alcoholic liquor. In doses small and not too frequent, they have a valuable stimulative effect and leave no unpleasant aftermath ; but excessive and over-frequent dosage tends rapidly to transform their works from good to evil. Some head teachers make excessive demands for tests and for test results ; and in so doing they dull the interest of teacher and pupils, and in addition cause waste of time and energy. A head teacher may certainly require that some tests should be given, and few would wish to prevent his arranging terminal or half-yearly tests. If he goes beyond these, however, he probably demonstrates either his lack of understanding of his pupils or his lack of confidence in his staff. No sensible businessman would make a cult of stocktaking.

Left to himself, the class teacher is very unlikely, if of any experience, to fall into the error of excessive testing. Where such excess is imposed upon him, he tends to develop a defensive cynicism and a protective technique. Such an attitude in the teacher is highly regrettable, but it is not he who is to be blamed for it. We hope that these remarks will be noted by every present and future head teacher.

(4) *Tests and the Parent*

There are parents of all kinds, intelligent, educated,

sensible—and otherwise. It is broadly true that the parent is liable to take a view of his child less objective than that of the teacher, and that, interfering between the child and his schooling, the parent is likely to do more harm than good. Consequently, test results are generally of little value to parents. They would be well advised to give their attention to the 'Remarks' rather than to the marks. It is probably best if marks are omitted from School Reports, or mentioned by categories only.

(5) *Tests and the Employer*

The prospective employer is rarely willing to be impressed by the results of school tests. Why should he be impressed? He knows neither the standard of the test papers, nor that of the marking. Thus test results can serve but indirectly when we wish to help him, or to help the pupil to approach him. The School Testimonial, and the 'Remarks' on the pupil's report, give help greater but insufficient. That is why so much importance is justifiably attached by employers, and also by authorities of universities and colleges, to the results of External School Examinations.

(6) *Tests and the Teacher*

The plain fact is that the class teacher is more enlightened by the result of a test than anyone else, and that he is best able to interpret the result. Unless he be shockingly incompetent, he is like a doctor examining a man's chest with a stethoscope : this valve is in good shape, this tissue is inflamed, there is excessive fluid in this lobe. Rarely does he need to make any statistical analysis of his marks : after marking the test, he knows well, often only too well, which parts of his work need curative attention. It is, further, clear that the teacher beyond all other knows what tests are needed, and when to set them. Therefore the

teacher should fully, or almost fully, control the testing of his class.

(7) *The Competitive Spirit*

We have referred above to the ill-effects of excessive testing. One of its worst results is the fostering of an unhealthy spirit of competition. It may or may not be true that society has reached a moral level higher than that of the jungle. It remains certain that few would account the spirit of combat as having a high moral value. In some schools, the effort is made to avoid competition completely : it would be interesting to know how they select their sports teams.

However we try to disguise it, the spirit of competition is deeply rooted in our natures, while the fact of competition pervades our society in general and our educational system in particular. Universities compete for the best students, while students compete for scholarships and places; businesses and professions compete for recruits, while applicants compete for posts. There is no need to pursue the argument into the dangerous domain of party strife : the facts of competition are clear, and it is best to face them.

Such competition as we have mentioned in the preceding paragraph is probably not to be regretted, but, on the other hand, we should be wrong to put forward competition as a major reason for endeavour. Harm is certainly done where competition is so emphasized that it seriously colours the minds of the pupils or staff. In bad cases, it may lead to hostilities, to dishonourable practices, and worse.

On balance, therefore, we suggest the recognition or tolerance, without encouragement, of a minimum degree of competition. It probably does more good than harm if a list of marks is made available to the pupils whenever an

important test has been given or their work over a term or year has been carefully weighed; and if admission to a top set or to a form preparing for an External Examination is looked upon as a recognition of ability and of attention to work. But the spirit of competition in the classroom should not be intensified beyond this point: we accept its existence, but we would rather moderate than cultivate it.

(8) *The Validity of Tests*

No test is fully efficient. Except where the ground to be covered by a test is very limited, the scope of the test can be but vaguely defined. Except where the whole ground is covered, there is a random error of sampling, since one question is asked and another not. There is always an imperfection of marking: even when Intelligence Tests are used, mark units cannot be split. It is rarely possible to prove with certainty that the questions are fitly framed and of standard difficulty. The ability and efficiency of the candidates tested are subject to fluctuation as well as to development. The interpretation of the results of tests, of whatever kind, can never have absolute validity.

Exaggerated claims are sometimes put forward for Intelligence Tests. Such tests tend to ask questions too discrete in fields too limited; the synthesis of ideas, so important in all highly intelligent work, finds little scope in such tests as applied to young people; it is very doubtful whether their customary emphasis on speed is justifiable; language, in its higher uses, has subtleties which defy all analysis, and sometimes all rational comprehension. We have a suspicion that Coleridge, say, if subjected to such tests, might have done much better than Milton, that La Fontaine would have made a very poor showing, and that Anthony Hamilton might have defeated Shakespeare. These tests, like all others, are fallible, and perhaps, in the case of pupils of high intelligence, more fallible than most.

The majority of teachers of language consider the methods of testing used in Intelligence Tests quite unsuited to their special field, at least once the elementary stage has been passed. We can, however, derive from them this much of negative wisdom: that, with the possible exception of tests limited to a small and well-prepared field, our test should stress accuracy and (where applicable) excellence of expression rather than speed.

It is unlikely that any problem of how to test is capable of perfect and final solution. None the less, research into methods of testing should be pursued by university organizations and by individual students and teachers. In the long run, much that is useful, at least in the way of broad suggestion, is bound to result from such research: the long run will be much shortened if investigators are more eager to verify their facts than to proceed hastily to the formulation of theory.

In the meantime, very little can be laid down as certain to increase the validity of tests. Questions must lie within the range of the possible achievement of the class; they must be clearly presented to the pupils, and must be free from ambiguity and from accidental complexity. Wherever classes have adequate accommodation, cheating can and should be entirely prevented. Everything possible should be done, by leaving plenty of 'room round the target,' to minimize flukes and to make guessing unprofitable: 'Insert *qui* or *que*' is useful as an exercise, but it is highly objectionable as a test. For the rest, fixed rules do not yet exist.

There is one important truth concerning the validity of tests which is often imperfectly appreciated. If we assume that our previous rudimentary counsels have been followed, then a pupil's success gives proof of achievement which is virtually absolute. For example, a pupil who can translate accurately into a foreign language an unprepared

passage requiring the use of a variety of tenses must know (in addition to much else) those uses of those tenses. But failure is far from perfect proof of ignorance or incomprehension: the pupil's performance may be disturbed, for example, by carelessness, hurry, ill-health, exciting distractions or family worries. The pupil may not know what is wrong with him; if he knows, he may still be unable to explain it. How many boys dare explain to a teacher that they are suffering from love unrequited?

Thus test successes have greater validity than test failures. We should always make careful inquiry before we punish or seriously reproach a pupil for bad work; we should be cautious in drawing the attention of the parents to any isolated failure; and, in any certificate intended to be shown beyond the circles of school and family, test failures should never be entered. Even if this and the preceding paragraph be rejected (they should not be rejected), yet still to enter a boy's failures on his School Certificate would be uncomfortably analogous to kicking him when he is down !

On the other hand, a test which gives proof of achievement may be far from having great prognostic value. For example, in an internal written test in a Modern Language, an able pupil, at the moment subject to a fit of adolescent carelessness, and who therefore knows and understands much more than he has shown, may receive the same mark as a dull plodder who has made the very best use of his limited assets. Yet the first may go on to a distinguished university career, while probably the second is forever incapable of such success. Careful reading of the pupils' answers may well give better guidance than do the mere marks; but, unless the teacher is eccentric to the point of incompetence, his estimates, based on a prolonged series of contacts, are likely to have still higher validity.

Where External Examinations are taken, the wide appli-

cation of an objective standard is very properly held by most people to enhance the value of the examination as a test of achievement. The Higher School Certificate Examinations (examinations at the Advanced Level), and in a still greater degree the Scholarship Papers of such examinations and of universities, make high demands on the intelligence of candidates and have high prognostic value. School Certificate Examinations (examinations at the 'Ordinary' Level) in Modern Languages, emphasizing achievement rather than intelligence, are in another category. If they have a higher prognostic value than ordinary school tests, it is only in so far as success proves a certain power of adjustment to circumstances. It would, therefore, appear very unwise to decide a pupil's Sixth-Form career solely on the results of the first Certificate Examination.

It is our opinion that, for purposes of prognosis, the opinion of a competent teacher should always carry weight, and that at all school stages below the highest, such an opinion should outweigh the result of any single test, by whomsoever set and marked.

(9) *Records*

Closely linked with the problem of tests is that of records, some of which are kept at the behest of authorities, some purely for school use.

Authorities have long tended to make increasing demands for statistics, and this tendency has recently gathered force. Yet most teachers question the value of some, at least, of the new demands. So far as he can, through his professional association and otherwise, the teacher must resist excessive demands of this kind, and, for the compilation of statistics of proved value, proper secretarial assistance should be provided in every school.

Yet some recording is truly necessary, and some records

are directly helpful to the teacher. Though he must have access to all available material if he desires it, he has rarely the time, energy and peculiar mental capacity to wade through a mass of detailed statistics and comments. Thus the matter supplied to the teacher should be limited to what is certainly valuable to him.

Record Cards sometimes err in this respect. In particular, estimates of character have very low validity. But abnormalities of past conduct, health and progress are matters of fact : they should be noted on the Record Card, and brought to the notice of the teacher. Knowledge of the pupil's home circumstances is extremely valuable, but is often lacking just where it would be most useful : bad parents are likely to conceal the truth, and their child is almost always reluctant to speak of their faults. Where such unfortunate facts are known, it might be dangerous to enter them on the Record Card, but they should certainly be made known to the teacher.

It has been suggested that an estimate of the pupil's linguistic ability should appear on the Record Card. It seems doubtful whether any such entry could have value before the beginning of the pupil's Secondary School career. Prognostic tests at some future time may achieve some success, but that time is not yet. Once the pupil has had two or three terms of Modern Language instruction, appraisements of some reliability are possible and, in most schools, are made for such purposes as the allocation of pupils to sets. Although often such estimates have to be modified in later years, on the whole they give useful guidance. We do not advise, however, that they be entered on the Record Card : such estimates, made for a specific purpose, are most easily compiled and considered when all the entries for a class appear on a single sheet ; and, if it is desired to preserve them, the filing of the few sheets necessary offers no difficulty. One absolute rule can in any

case be firmly stated : whenever the teacher has to express an opinion on a pupil, he should give his own view, undistorted by the estimates of others.

Teachers in general, and Modern Language teachers especially, vary greatly in the importance which they attach to the results of past school tests. Some consider the pupil's general form position, some his past work in their own subject or in allied subjects, some prefer to form their impressions unprejudiced by the opinions of others. To each his own method : but, on the whole, it would appear that the importance of past test results is often over-estimated. Once a school test has lost its immediate interest, its value is virtually exhausted.

2. TERMINAL AND ANNUAL TESTS

(1) *Their Frequency and Duration*

In almost every school, it is at intervals customary to submit the pupils to formal tests in all important subjects. The head teacher directs that the tests be held ; usually he draws up or authorizes a special timetable for the occasion, fixing the duration of the various tests.

There is, however, great variation in the frequency with which such tests are held. In some schools they are held in every term, in others twice a year, and in some cases but once a year.

We have already said that to hold such tests more than once a term gives more trouble than profit : it is further probable that once a term is too often. If we take the school year as having 38 weeks (it should certainly not have more), then to take a total of four, five or six weeks for testing, marking and recording seems excessive. There is, consequently, a strong case for advocating half-yearly or yearly tests.

Tests in the Fifth and Sixth Forms offer special problems and will be discussed in Section 4 of this chapter. In

the case of Forms One to Four, annual tests would appear to offer something less than the desired degree of stimulus. To a Third-Form boy in September, a test in the following July seems almost as remote as the Day of Judgment. School pupils in general, young schoolboys in particular, strongly tend to live almost wholly in the present; it is well that they should look upon their time of scholastic reckoning as lying within the limits of reality.

On the whole, therefore, we recommend that school tests be held twice a year. Yet we do so only on one important condition: that such tests must not be held at mid-term. In some schools, the examinations are held in February and July; so far as February is concerned, this is a vicious system. It is not only that February is the time when, in day-schools at any rate, illness is most prevalent; there is the added fact that, whatever be the case with pupils, teachers certainly need a good period of rest after a school test week. For these reasons we recommend that if such 'weeks' are held twice yearly, it should be in December and July.

There is a compromise solution of the problem which is little, if at all, inferior to that which we have just recommended. In some schools, annual tests are held towards the end of the Easter term; in December and July, the teachers are required to set tests, of such scope as they themselves feel useful, in ordinary class-periods. This system leaves much to the discretion of the class-teacher, and, indeed, tends to show praiseworthy confidence of the head-teacher in his staff. In boarding-schools, where it has sometimes been found that summer accidents are more frequent than winter ailments, this latter system may well be the best. In day schools, it has the disadvantage that the most important tests are given at the end of that term when ill-health has been most prevalent.

The problem of the duration of test-papers deserves

more attention than it receives in most schools. To test a Fourth-Form pupil's written work in a Modern Language, an hour and a quarter or an hour and a half seems a reasonable period : for a boy who has completed but one term's study of a first Modern Language, the time is ludicrously long. It is doubtful whether it is worth while to give any formal written tests before the second term; and, if the method of oral approach has been exclusively used, the written test is impossible in the early stages. Yet head teachers have been known to insist on the test and on its duration. One solution of the problem, more readily practicable in small schools than in large, is to make the Modern Language teacher the supervisor of the junior form for that period: he can then give some suitable oral test. At the very least, when young pupils are subjected to a long test period, arrangements should be made, as soon as all have finished, to collect the papers and to allow other activity. This will prevent much loss of the stimulative value of the test.

Some subjects need more time for a test than others, just as older pupils generally need more time than younger; yet problems of school organization may make difficult the allotment of periods of different lengths to the tests. Where such problems are not insuperable, we recommend for Modern Language tests the following approximate periods:

Form I : not exceeding 60 minutes.

Form II : 70 minutes.

Forms III and IV : 75-90 minutes.

For all these forms, one paper should be sufficient.

It is obvious that the system of formal testing used in the school will greatly influence the necessity for ordinary progress testing : the more of the one, the less of the other. It remains true that formal tests use more time than they save and disproportionately exhaust the energy of the teacher. They have their value, but they obstruct the

ordinary work of teaching and should be strictly limited in their incidence.

(2) *Oral Term Tests*

Were there no practical difficulties, most good teachers of Modern Languages would add to every formal written test an oral test of equal importance. They would do so, if for no other reason, merely to emphasize to the pupils the need for mastery of the spoken tongue. In practice, however, a full oral examination as part of school tests offers difficulties almost insuperable.

Since classes are usually large, a satisfactory conversation test would necessarily last a long time. Further, pupils can rarely be examined separately, since this necessitates two teachers and two rooms; but, if each pupil is tested in the presence of the others, the teacher has to devise many different tests, and no equation of difficulty can be obtained.

A recitation test, used primarily to gauge pronunciation, is easier to manage, since each pupil can say the same stanza or paragraph. Yet 35 repetitions of, say, 'Il pleut, il pleut, bergère' amount to something very like torture for the teacher—and probably for the pupils. A reading test is preferable. It is quite easily managed, even with a large class; if familiar material is chosen, each pupil has substantial equality of opportunity; and the test is not particularly arduous for the teacher. We strongly recommend this type of test, both for its informative and for its stimulative value.

Some types of semi-oral test can easily be given and are of great value. Pre-eminent among these is 'Dictée.' All experience tends to prove that dictation, wisely chosen, is of great service as an exercise and of high stimulative value and validity as a test. 'Dictée' should be given in connection with each written school test.

Comprehension tests are also possible. Thus, a passage may be read and re-read by the teacher, after which the pupils are required to write answers to questions on it. If maximum validity is the object of the test, questions should be given and answers written in English; and such a test, if suited to the methods of the teacher, can be very useful indeed. Many, however, will feel that there is greater educational advantage if all is done in the foreign language: if so, a very simple passage should be chosen and the questions should be as easy as possible to understand. The hard worker of little linguistic ability must not be discouraged.

A test that is quicker, but of less scope, may be given by asking suitable questions without preliminary reading. The following, for example, might be given at the end of a first year of French study:—

1. Comment vous appelez-vous?
2. Quel âge avez-vous?
3. Êtes-vous une fillette?
4. Est-ce que je suis un élève?
5. Que faites-vous?
6. Avec quoi écrivez-vous?
7. Pourquoi venez-vous à l'école?
8. Est-ce aujourd'hui lundi?
9. Nommez les quatre saisons.
10. Qu'est-ce qui est derrière le professeur?

We have said that such tests as these are practicable and useful in connection with a formal written test; but the school organization may not allow them to be given during 'test week.' The Modern Language teacher may not be with the class when the test is given; the teacher who draws up the examination time-table may well look askance at a request for special arrangements. Thus, it may be necessary to give tests involving speech in ordinary lesson periods before the examination 'week' begins. There does

not seem to be much harm in this, and, in any case, tests of the types which we have recommended are too valuable to be neglected.

(3) *Written Tests*

(i) *Standardization within the school*

In some schools, the Senior Modern Language teacher sets the same written paper to all pupils in a given year. This procedure reduces the work of preparing the question papers, facilitates the comparison of the progress of pupils in different classes and, incidentally, serves as a check on the work of individual teachers.

Yet such a system has important disadvantages: the stimulative value of a school examination is hardly likely to reach its maximum if the examiner does not know the pupils; the studies of different classes may have to proceed at different rates; the same textbook, and more frequently the same reader, may not be suitable for all; the teaching aids should vary with teacher and class; and there is a tendency to impose on teachers a standardization of teaching method which some would consider undesirable.

Still more serious is the difficulty of setting a paper suitable for all groups. Perhaps it does not much matter if the paper is too easy for the promising linguists, yet often the range of ability among the forms or sets is so wide that a paper which lets all the best pupils get very high marks is still far beyond the weakest pupils. Those among the latter who are conscientiously doing their best are profoundly discouraged by the experience, and not only their Modern Language work but their whole mental health may suffer in consequence.

The evidence available hardly suffices to condemn the system outright, for an inexperienced teacher may well profit by the advice of an older colleague; but, on the whole, we feel that it is better for each teacher to set his

own papers. If this advice is not accepted, then certainly, before the paper is finally adopted, all the teachers concerned should be consulted and their views carefully considered. Further, an effort should be made to avoid the creation of an inferiority complex in the poor linguists. We suggest that the paper should begin with a very easy question and that the difficulty should increase as the paper proceeds. Thus, if we may use the old-fashioned or traditional type of question for purposes of illustration, a Third-Form test might be made up of five questions as follows :—

1. An easy piece of translation into English, taken almost without alteration from the course or reader studied.
2. A rather more difficult passage to be translated into English, perhaps an unseen passage composed for the purpose, but in any case based on the matter studied.
3. An easy Free Composition, in which much help in vocabulary, etc., is given.
4. Some simple short sentences to be translated into the Modern Language.
5. A short continuous passage of 'prose' capable of fully extending the best pupils.

The same principle of advancing difficulty can equally be applied to tests of a more modern type and should be adopted whenever there is a great range of ability among the pupils.

(ii) Types of School Test

In devising our tests, we should always carefully adjust their difficulty to the capacities of our pupils. We have already referred to the grave disadvantages which arise if the tests are too difficult. The inexperienced examiner should particularly guard against this danger; he should also beware of setting tests too long. Every pupil should be

able to make some attempt at nearly every question, and almost everyone should be able to finish within the time allowed. We must remember that the pupil knows but little, nor knows that little well. We must on no account tear in shreds the thin garment of confidence that partially hides his defects from himself.

It is well known that the hardest questions are those which demand active use of the language, that is, which require the pupil to construct his own sentences. Therefore, whatever the types of test questions preferred in general, the amount of active work set should be greatly reduced for poor classes.

Written test questions, as set in the early years of language study, can broadly be divided into three types, which for convenience we shall call the 'grammatical,' the 'traditional' and the 'modern.'

The *grammatical* type includes such questions as these :

1. Write the Imperfect of *commencer*, the Past Historic of *devoir*, the Future of *aller*, etc.
2. Give the plural of *le travail*, *le hibou*, *l'eau*, *principal*, *heureux*, etc.
3. Give the feminine of *l'oncle*, *l'homme*, *beau*, *dernier*, *cruel*, etc.
4. Translate : to the boys, of the father, some meat, etc.

Such questions attempt to isolate the structure of the language from its use. Tending thus to force the pupil to concentrate on reproducing facts which he has learnt, they are particularly useful in progress tests (as we shall see in the next section of this chapter) and can sometimes be used with advantage in formal school tests. They are easy to set and swift to mark ; but, apart from that pleasure inseparable from any job well done and from the baser joy of accumulating marks, they lack all stimulative value and soon induce weariness in the able pupil, frustration in the non-linguist. In any case, to know only the structure of a

language is to have but a skeleton with no possibility of life. Therefore, 'grammatical' questions, if used at all in a formal school test, should carry at most, say, 25 per cent. of the marks, and perhaps are best placed last on the paper. Certainly such questions must never dominate the test.

The *traditional* type of question relies almost exclusively on translation, whether of isolated sentences or of connected passages; e.g. :—

Translate : (1) The man, who came to my house, was carrying a black bag, etc.

(2) Je viens de voir un incident des plus frappants, je vous le raconterai. Figurez-vous que ce soir, etc.

When dealing with Lower and Middle School Forms, such questions can be marked as swiftly as those of the 'grammatical' type, but they require more care in the setting. Inexperienced teachers often underrate the difficulty of such questions. But it seems indisputable that translation tests, if wisely set, are of validity unsurpassed, if not unequalled.

It does not follow that such tests must necessarily be given; other tests may be almost equally valid, or the teacher may well consider that great educational and stimulative values more than compensate for a slightly inferior validity.

There is, in fact, among teachers of experience the widest possible divergence of opinion as to the desirability of tests of the 'traditional' type. There are some to whom translation is an artificial monstrosity, others to whom it is a perfectly natural and almost unavoidable process wherever Modern Languages are studied. Translation tests are chiefly attacked by exponents of the Direct Method, who use special processes in their class teaching; and yet some enthusiastic supporters of the oral approach, probably attracted by the high validity of the results, make more or less use of translation in formal tests.

We are not so rash as to attempt any final and universal decision in the matter. It is, however, certain that testing method should be closely related to teaching method. Thus the inexperienced teacher should set test questions similar to written exercises to which the class is accustomed; later, he will find instruction in experimenting with exercises and test questions of other types.

All experience tends to show that the more advanced the pupils, the more justifiable and the more useful are translation tests. Thus, if it is decided to use some translation tests, the First-Form paper may include an easy passage from the reader used and another passage, composed by the teacher, but wholly based on matter carefully studied; each of these questions may carry 15 per cent. of the total marks.

In the Second Form, we may add a few easy sentences to be translated into the Modern Language, with a maximum mark of, say, 20 per cent. These sentences will be longer and harder in the Third-Form paper, or it may be possible to compose a short continuous passage of English not too difficult for its purpose; in either case, the mark may be increased to 30 per cent. In the case of the Fourth Form, the continuous prose passage should not be at all hard to devise; the translation from the foreign language may include nothing directly from the matter read, but one passage based on such matter together with an easy unseen passage.

In all translation questions, the actual passage to be translated should interest the pupils as much as may be. Unfortunately, it is rarely possible to include much of attraction in the English set for translation: the limitations of the pupils hinder the free literary expression of the teacher. Jingles of words, sallies of rather crude humour are sometimes possible: 'How many rats do the black cats catch?' 'The headmaster knows all the answers.'

Pupils, as a rule, do not dislike such pleasantries, but most teachers think it best to avoid them.

Passages for translation into English offer better opportunities. It is usually possible to pick out one or more lively passages from the course or reader (if it is not possible, then the books should be changed!); and the teacher, if he so wishes, can generally re-write the passage as a semi-unseen with but little loss of gusto. It is harder to choose an unseen passage which combines interest and linguistic suitability, but the effort to find such material should be made.

Yet the teacher is not compelled to use translation questions at all. He can, as he chooses, partially or wholly replace such tests by questions of the *Modern* type, which encourage the pupil to use the foreign language without translation. There are very many varieties of such questions from which he may choose, e.g. :—

1. Répondez aux questions : Pourquoi allez-vous à l'école ? etc.
2. Lisez le morceau suivant, et répondez aux questions.
3. Écrivez 50 mots à peu près pour répondre à cette question : Que ferez-vous samedi prochain ?
4. Copiez le morceau suivant, en vous servant du parfait ou de l'imparfait de l'indicatif : Il fait beau, le soleil brille. Nous sortons de la maison, nous prenons nos bicyclettes, et nous partons pour la forêt, etc.
5. Écrivez au pluriel : J'ai entendu la sonnette, mais je ne me suis pas levé. Ma soeur est allée à la porte, où elle a vu le beau monsieur qu'elle avait rencontré près du pont, etc.
6. Remplacez les tirets par des partitifs : Nous avons—livres intéressants et—beaux tableaux, etc.
7. Remplacez les substantifs par des pronoms : *Henri* a offert *des saucisses au curé*, etc.

8. Racontez brièvement l'histoire de La Petite Vendeuse d'Allumettes.

9. Écrivez les huit premiers vers de 'Cadet Rousselle'.

It will be noticed that the above questions (and many others which can be devised) do not by any means all test the same things. Questions on repetition frankly test memory: some teachers are confident, others are doubtful of their value. Substitutions, changings to plural, feminine, etc., and the filling of gaps tend strongly to be 'grammatical' questions under a thin disguise: provided that they are kept within due bounds, they are none the less very useful. 'Active' questions, requiring the pupil to construct his own sentences, are much wider in scope, but are much more difficult to assess exactly. Thus, in answer to the question: 'Que faisiez-vous à sept heures ce matin?' one pupil may write: 'Je dormais'; another 'Je me levais pour aller à l'école'; and a third 'J'étais dans la cuisine, et j'aidais ma mère à préparer le petit déjeuner'. It is not easy to compare these answers in terms of marks; and how are we to compare an ambitious but faulty attempt with a minimum answer that plays for safety? For these and other reasons, it is best in Free Composition to specify a number of words; and to base questions for answer on a passage quoted, or previously studied with care, in which case questions can be so framed as to predetermine the length and form of a good answer. All 'active' questions are difficult and, therefore, should always be based exclusively on matter with which the pupil is very familiar: the marks will then be more representative of the pupils' abilities and achievements, and the risk of setting up inferiority complexes will be minimized.

It is clear that each teacher must devise tests suited to the matter studied by his pupils and to his own practice in teaching. No book of tests prepared by a stranger is

likely to serve his purpose, nor are any papers drawn up by us likely to give complete satisfaction to anyone but ourselves. But, in the hope of providing some suggestive value, we append four specimen test papers, intentionally varied as to type and language:—

Form I: French. Compromise ('traditional,' 'modern,' and 'grammatical').

Form II: German. 'Modern'.

Form III: Spanish. Compromise ('traditional,' 'modern,' and 'grammatical').

Form IV: French. 'Traditional'.

In each case, it is assumed that the language concerned is studied as a 'first language', and that the test is set at the end of the School Year. It is further understood that the vocabulary, grammar, etc., treated in the questions have been adequately studied in the class lessons.

SPECIMEN TEST PAPER NO I. SET AT END OF FIRST YEAR ('Compromise' type)

I.—Translate (*passage assumed quoted from Course*): —

Robert a commencé à jouer au jardin. Il a jeté sa balle en l'air. Malheureusement, elle a cassé une vitre de la fenêtre du colonel; elle a passé dans sa chambre. Tout de suite, le colonel a regardé par la fenêtre cassée. Furieux, il a lancé sur l'enfant tout un torrent de reproches. Robert a écouté tranquillement et en silence. Enfin, quand l'officier a cessé de parler, l'enfant lui a dit: 'Monsieur le colonel, voulez-vous me jeter ma balle, s'il vous plaît?' (15 marks)

II.—Translate (*passage assumed somewhat adapted from Course*): —

Vers quatre heures, Louis et Marie arrivent près de la basse-cour. Là, ils trouvent la barrière fermée, et un chien très gros qui saute et aboie d'une manière féroce. 'Oh!' dit Marie, 'j'ai peur! Prenons l'autre chemin.' 'Je n'ai pas peur!' répond Louis. 'Je vais passer par ici!' Il ouvre la barrière, et il caresse le chien, qui cesse d'aboyer. Les enfants passent. Marie admire

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le courage de son frère. Elle ne sait pas que le chien est de ses amis. (15 marks)

III.—Write French sentences in answer to the questions :—

1. Comment vous appelez-vous?
2. Quel âge avez-vous?
3. Où demeurez-vous?
4. Que faites-vous avec une plume?
5. À quelle heure quittez-vous l'école? (10 marks)

IV.—Copy these sentences, omitting the brackets, and putting the adjectives into their proper forms :—

1. Voilà une (beau) fleur (rouge).
2. Les (jeune) filles (français) portent les (joli) robes (blanc).
3. Les verres (précieux) sont (cassé).
4. Les enfants (joyeux) regardent les tableaux (magnifique). (10 marks)

V.—Use *de*, *du*, *de la*, *de l'*, or *des* to fill each gap :—

1. Je vois ——— herbe et ——— arbres.
2. Nous avons beaucoup ——— oranges et peu ——— pommes.
3. Ma mère a acheté ——— fruits, ——— viande et ——— pain.
4. Avez-vous ——— argent? Non, mais j'ai ——— timbres-poste.
5. J'ai mangé ——— soupe. (10 marks)

VI.—Write pronouns in place of the nouns :—

1. *La dame* n'aime pas *la chatte*.
2. *Le professeur* trouve *le livre*.
3. Voici *les garçons*. Où sont *les fillettes*?
4. *Les hommes* coupent *le bois*.
5. *La mère* apporte *le café*. (10 marks)

VII.—Make the nouns feminine :—

1. Le méchant garçon ne répond pas à son père.
2. Le fermier a un beau chat.
3. Ton oncle parle au professeur.
4. Le fils de l'épicier n'est pas ici.
5. Le jeune élève parle à son frère. (15 marks)

VIII.—Give the 3rd Person Singular, the 1st Person Plural and the 3rd Person Plural of the Present Tense of *finir*, *être*, *trouver*, *avoir* and *attendre*. (15 marks)

(This Paper is of suitable length for an examination wholly

written lasting about 80 minutes. It is given at this length because time-tables sometimes require such a period. If our advice to limit the written test to one hour can be taken, two questions might be omitted. Twenty marks could then be reserved for Dictée, etc.)

SPECIMEN TEST PAPER NO. 2. SET AT END OF
SECOND YEAR. (German : 'Modern' type)

I.—Ergänzen Sie :—

1. Eine (schön, Kompar.) Blume als dies—— habe ich nie gesehen.
2. Dies—— fleissig—— Schüler müssen zu ihr—— neu—— Lehrer gehen.
3. D—— Besitzer dies—— blau—— Bleistifts ist mein jung—— Freund.
4. Das ist ein—— der (gut, Superl.) Bücher, die ich gelesen habe.
5. Wie viel—— neu—— Autos haben Sie neulich auf d—— Strasse gesehen?
6. Der Mann, d—— Name Thomas ist, wohnt in ein—— Hütte.
7. Das Schloss, d—— auf ein—— Hügel steht, ist sehr alt.
8. Er fragte, wie alt ich (sein)
9. Er sagte, sein Fahrrad (haben) viel Geld gekostet.
10. Wir können nicht hinausgehen, weil es heute (regnen).

(22 marks)

II.—Beantworten Sie :—

1. Wie alt sind Sie?
2. Was ist Berlin?
3. Wohin gehen Sie, um einen Film zu sehen?
4. Wohin gehen Sie, um deutsch zu lernen?
5. Wer bringt uns unsere Briefe?

(15 marks)

III.—Schreiben Sie nicht mehr als 50 Worte über eines der folgenden Themen :—

1. Meine Schule.
2. Unser Garten.
3. Meine Familie.
4. Mein Haus.
5. Die Sommerferien.

(20 marks)

IV.—Präsens, Perfekt, Imperfekt, Futur :—

1. Ich (wollen) am Ausflug teilnehmen.
2. Er (gehen) auf die Jagd.
3. Wir (sitzen) auf der Bank.
4. Ich (warten) auf einen Dampfer.
5. Der Junge (sich waschen) das Gesicht. (20 marks)

V.—Schreiben Sie im Passiv :—

1. Mein Vater hat ein Haus gebaut.
2. Die Dame schrieb einen langen Brief.
3. Morgen wird uns der Lehrer eine deutsche Stunde geben. (9 marks)

VI.—Bilden Sie Sätze mit den folgenden Wörten :—

1. helfen.
2. begegnen.
3. bitten.
4. vorbeigehen.
5. gefallen. (15 marks)

SPECIMEN TEST PAPER NO. 3. SET AT END OF THIRD
YEAR. (Spanish : 'Compromise' type)

I.—Write in the plural :—

Este hombre es más joven que aquél.
 ¿Le gusta a Vd ese reloj?
 Leo la lección.
 Si hago una falta la corrijo con lápiz.
 Busqué al niño y le hallé.
 Digo que no puedo hacerlo.
 Démelo Vd. (12 marks)

II.—Replace the blanks with the correct part of *ser* or *estar* :—

Mi casa ——— lejos de las tiendas.
 Este hombre ——— soldado.
 Los niños ——— sentados en el suelo.
 El regalo ——— para mi madre.
 ¿Dónde ——— el Perú?
 ¿—— un país o una ciudad?
 ¿Qué hora ——— cuando Vd entró?
 Nosotros ——— trabajando ahora.
 Aquel hombre ——— rico y ——— enfermo. (10 marks)

III.—Fill in the blanks with the required parts of *tener* or *haber* :—

Yo ——— muchas cosas que hacer.

Nosotros ——— escrito muchas cartas.

Vds ——— que volver a casa ahora.

Salió después de ——— comido.

Ellos ——— de tener hambre. (5 marks)

IV.—Complete these sentences in Spanish :—

Estos sellos son (mine), (yours) están allí.

(Our) zapatos son nuevos, (his) son viejos.

Yo tengo mi pluma, ellos tienen (theirs). (5 marks)

V.—Write in the Perfect tense :—

El hombre rompe sus lentes.

No vimos la película.

¿Qué hace Vd con el cortaplumas?

Ellos no vuelven hoy.

El niño se pone a llorar.

No quiero hacerlo.

Dice que no puede venir. (8 marks)

VI.—Complete these sentences in Spanish :—

Veo a (somebody).

No veo a (anybody).

(Nobody) vive allí.

¿Tiene Vd (some) dinero?

No tengo (any).

(Somebody) llama a la puerta.

¿Ha perdido Vd (something)?

No he perdido (anything). (8 marks)

VII.—Answer in Spanish :—

¿Qué hace Vd el domingo por la mañana?

¿Cuáles son los meses que tienen treinta días?

¿Por qué les gusta a los niños el día de Navidad?

¿Qué hará Vd esta tarde a las cuatro?

¿Qué estación del año prefiere Vd? (10 marks)

VIII.—Translate :—

Do you know at what time the train leaves? I do not know that man. I like to go to the cinema every Thursday. The weather is finer today. It rained a lot last week. Ask him for

the money if you want it. Juan said to himself, 'I shall get up early to-morrow morning and I shall get to school before half past eight.' That is better than the other one. Girls are often cleverer than boys. He washed his hands and face. He will be fourteen on the 24th of March. (30 marks)

IX.—Write six sentences in Spanish on :—

Una visita a la casa de un amigo. (12 marks)

(For duller pupils, this Paper could be shortened by reducing the length of Question VIII.)

SPECIMEN TEST PAPER NO. 4 SET AT END OF FOURTH YEAR. (French : 'Traditional' type)

I.—Translate (*unseen, constructed by teacher*) :—

C'était à l'époque de la Première Grande Guerre. Moi, j'avais treize ans, et j'allais au lycée en chemin de fer. Un soir après les classes, nos sacs tout pleins de livres d'études, nous nous sommes rendus à la gare. Un train s'est approché : il filait assez vite, il ne s'arrêtait pas; comme il passait, nous nous sommes aperçus qu'il était plein de soldats. Une demi-heure après, un deuxième train a passé de même; encore une longue attente, et un troisième a passé, suivi d'un quatrième et d'un cinquième. Nous perdions l'espoir. Nous étions jeunes, voyez-vous, et nous n'avions rien mangé depuis le déjeuner. Nos estomacs criaient la faim. Il y avait bien le restaurant de la gare, mais comment y manger sans argent? Heureusement, notre train est enfin arrivé, mais au complet : nous y sommes entrés, cependant, n'importe comment et à toutes forces. J'arrive au logis, ma mère inquiète me reçoit avec joie; et moi, je mange jusqu'à lui faire horreur! (25 marks)

II.—Translate (*unseen, adapted from Zola*) :—

Le dimanche, par une habitude d'ancien marchand, Mouret quittait sa solitude pour faire un tour en ville. Le matin, il se rasait, mettait une chemise blanche, brossait ses habits et son chapeau; puis, après le déjeuner, sans savoir comment, il se trouvait dans la rue, marchant à petits pas, les mains derrière le dos.

Un dimanche, comme il mettait le pied hors de chez lui, il aperçut sur le trottoir de la rue Rose, sa bonne, qui causait

vivement avec celle du juge. Les deux cuisinières cessèrent de parler en le voyant, elles l'examinèrent d'un air très singulier. Lorsqu'il fut arrivé à la place de la Mairie, il tourna la tête, il les retrouva plantées à la même place : Rose imitait le balancement d'un homme ivre (*drunk*), tandis que la bonne du juge riait aux éclats.

'Je marche trop vite, elles se moquent de moi,' pensa Mouret. Il ralentit encore le pas. (25 marks)

III.—Translate :—

One morning, our mother said to us : 'Yesterday you worked in the garden, to-morrow you will return to school; to-day, would you like to go to the woods?' We were very glad to hear that, we laughed and sang. We washed ourselves quickly, and took our bicycles. The sun was shining, it was hot, but at the end of an hour, we arrived at the woods. Robert said : 'Let us go and look for some nests!' 'Very well,' said our mother, 'look at them, but do not take any eggs that you find.' We went among the trees, and we found many nests, and some fine eggs. At twelve o'clock, we were hungry. We returned to our mother, who was sitting beside a little lake, and we ate the cakes and the chocolate which she had brought. Towards three o'clock, it was beginning to be cold, and to rain a little. We set off for home. (30 marks)

IV.—Write in French a composition of about 80 words on this subject :—

La Ville (ou Le Village) où je demeure. (20 marks)

3. PROGRESS TESTING

(1) The novice teacher is sometimes over-confident. He has clearly explained to the pupils the matter in hand, therefore, it is understood by them all; they wish to make good progress, therefore they will carefully study the homework he has set; the book gives clear examples of the application of the rule, therefore the principle will be firmly grasped.

In all probability, such excessive faith will speedily be affected by the teacher's experiences in oral and written practice; but disillusionment, however deferred, is sure to

come with the first serious progress test that he gives to the pupils. The novice is then profoundly depressed to discover that few of his pupils have truly understood rules and principles, properly studied the matter set, or remembered much of what they have read and heard.

To a sensitive man, such disappointment may well be more harmful than any degree of over-confidence: he may blame himself far too much. The experienced teacher knows well that pupils can learn but slowly, that their limited background of understanding causes them much bewilderment, that their will to learn is weak, their memory fitful. He knows that continual testing is necessary, in order that defects may be quickly brought to light, and so far as possible remedied. The novice will be well advised to test even more carefully than his expert colleague.

This does not mean that he should make a written test follow every lesson and every homework; on the contrary, such a rhythm would consume time altogether excessive and by its monotony might defeat its object. Fortunately, there are other ways of finding out what the pupils know or do not know, and these alternative methods should be used so far as they are suitable.

In the teaching of Modern Languages, more than in any other type of instruction, oral question and answer are important. Such work often reveals very clearly the deficiencies of individual pupils or of a class. An oral lesson or part-lesson, even without any such intention on the part of the teacher, may serve admirably as a progress test; while a few minutes of deliberate and searching interrogation may make the situation abundantly clear. The inexperienced teacher, however, must not be misled by ready answers from a few eager and able pupils: in oral practice, it is often useful to let the best linguists do more than a strictly proportionate share of the work; but,

in oral testing, the teacher should rather concentrate on those who are more likely to be at fault.

He may be sufficiently informed by ordinary practice of other kinds. Bad reading reveals incomprehension, ignorance, carelessness or lack of ability, and the teacher should soon have little difficulty in his diagnosis of the complaint. Written exercises nearly always show the need for further remedial teaching of the class or for stimulation of indolent individuals; but work written at home, which gives much opportunity for copying, and possibly for excessive help from older members of the family, is less decisively informative than work done in class.

For their testing of progress, a few teachers rely almost exclusively on class exercises and quick oral interrogation. Such a method is particularly difficult when classes are large and, in any case, demands of the teacher a fund of experience and a peculiar alertness which he may not have at his command. The great majority of teachers administer specific written tests from time to time; and certainly all inexperienced instructors should do so.

It is, indeed, probable that a brief written test, strictly limited in scope, is the quickest way of proving the pupil's understanding or knowledge of the matter in hand. It is especially effective for testing a point of grammar or a small section of vocabulary. In such a test, the questions should be clear, the answers short, but care should be taken to reduce to a minimum the advantages of guessing; often called a 'slip-test', it may take no more than five or ten minutes to give.

At the end of a slip-test, many teachers make the pupils exchange papers and mark each other's work; others allow each pupil to mark his own. Some hold that a pupil marking his own paper is excessively tempted to carelessness and cheating. Others hold that the responsibility helps to develop the pupil's sense of duty, that he profits by the

speedy discovery of his errors and that, in any case, the risk of collusion is greater, not less, than that of cheating by individuals. Others again, putting validity first, prefer to mark all papers themselves; these either run through the questions after collecting the papers or deal with errors in a subsequent lesson. The whole question is probably a matter of the special relations between the teacher and his class. It is certain that a good teacher can in such marking more safely trust his pupils than can a bad one; while an 'A' stream will usually be found more honourable and more careful in marking than their less able school-mates. The inexperienced teacher should mark the papers himself.

Whatever the method of marking, the teacher should always scrutinize the papers—even with a large class it need take only a quarter of an hour or so—and he should deal effectively with any cheating or carelessness in marking that he may detect; and, as it should be unnecessary to remark, he should take steps to remedy linguistic faults and deficiencies revealed by the test.

Slip-tests should not be given too often, for they quickly lose their stimulative value; nor should they be given at regularly recurrent intervals. Most teachers would probably advise a frequency of something less than once a week.

(2) *Extended Progress Tests*

From time to time, say once in every three or four weeks, or two or three times in a term, the teacher may give a test of wider scope, which perhaps may last for a whole lesson. Such a test comes with most of convenience and effect during a week of revision and consolidation. It may, further, serve admirably as a stimulant in the event of any drooping of interest. Theorists sometimes assume that the enthusiasm of the pupils will never flag; but it is harder to interest some than others, the teacher cannot always be in

good health, voice, and spirits, and sometimes the interest of the pupils is dispersed by outside distractions. In any such circumstances, a revision test serves a specially good purpose. The test will in any case provide useful information and will usually indicate a need for immediate action in one direction or another.

The revision or consolidation type of test should deal chiefly with work recently taught; but it can hardly be limited to such a small field, and previous achievement will and should influence the result.

In such tests, grammatical questions often loom large, but any type of question may be useful, and various questions may be combined as desired. One effective 'battery' of tests consists of: a short passage of dictation, composed as a test piece; one or two short 'modern type' questions on the grammar which is specially to be tested; and a few searching questions to be answered in the language. Alternatively, the test might include a short 'dictée' and a longer series of 'sentences'.

It will be of advantage if the test is set and marked with a certain degree of formality; and, when the papers are returned to the pupils, they should be accompanied by judicious remarks of congratulation or criticism. The teacher need take no precaution to avoid giving offence to the wilfully indolent. Care should be taken, however, not to discourage the ungifted trier, and not to weigh too hardly on pupils, usually attentive, who for once have failed to do themselves justice. Some small concession can be made, even in marking the test, to a pupil who is genuinely trying to make up ground lost by illness or other unavoidable cause. Taken as a whole, the test should encourage, not depress.

The teacher will proceed to give such further teaching and to make the pupils do such corrections and exercises as may remedy the worst of the faults which he has

noticed—so far as they are remediable ! Adolescents are less logical and less consistent than adults: thus some degree of inefficiency must be tolerated, even in the best classes; while in the worst, the teacher must be grateful for any flickering of understanding that he may discover.

If a second lesson can be spared for the test, a reading or other 'semi-oral' test can with advantage be added to the written test: the results have validity, the test has stimulative value, and a full quota will be added to the general consolidation of the work of recent weeks.

The teacher may be required to render a mark in evaluation of the pupil's work for the term, half-year, etc. It is probably best to base such a mark wholly on the results of the more extended progress tests. Of course, marks given for some or all of the slip-tests can be reckoned in the total; and by this means, pupils may be encouraged to work consistently. Yet the marks awarded in major progress tests are likely to have the highest informative value. For such evaluations, it is always best to avoid reckoning marks given for work written as homework.

It is implicit in the whole of this section that, since progress testing is part of individual teaching method, it should be left entirely to the judgment of the class teacher. In this matter, any interference by Senior or Head Teacher is likely to do more harm than good.

We give below a specimen progress test. It is assumed that 40 minutes are allowed and that the test is set to a Second Form who have recently made acquaintance with the Imperfect Tense and the Emphatic Pronouns in French.

(3) *Specimen Progress Test*

I.—Dictée:—

Un jour, quand nous étions à l'école, notre professeur a dit: 'Henri et Marcel, que faisiez-vous hier soir? Robert, pourquoi

étiez-vous au parc à huit heures et demie?' Je ne voulais pas lui dire la vérité, alors j'ai répondu: 'Monsieur, nous regardions les messieurs qui jouaient au tennis.' Mais je voyais bien qu'il ne croyait pas ce que je disais.

II.—Translate:—

1. It is he.
2. With them.
3. Who is there?—I (am).
4. Who spoke?—He (did).
5. At her house.
6. Talk to me.
7. You ! (plural) You are stupid.
8. I was waiting.
9. Do you finish?
10. They used to have.

III.—Écrivez cinq phrases sur le sujet:—

'Ce que je faisais quand j'étais petit'.

4. EXAMINATIONS AND TESTS IN THE UPPER FORMS

(I) THE 'ORDINARY' OR 'CREDIT' PAPERS

(i) *General Considerations*

The Modern Language Papers of the School Certificate Examination have been the outcome of long experience, continually reviewed, and suited as well as possible to the practice of the majority of teachers. It is, therefore, unlikely that any revolution in the general scheme of the tests would bring good results. Failing unforeseen educational discovery, progress can come only from the improvement or development of existing method.

Typically, the S.C. Examination has consisted of an Oral Test, which includes Dictée, Reading and/or Recitation, and Conversation; and of two Written Tests each of about 90 minutes and including Translation into the foreign language ('Thème') and from it ('Version'), Free Composition and a Comprehension Test. The number and duration of the Written Papers and the selection, com-

pilation and length of the questions appear to us broadly satisfactory. The Oral Test is in some cases optional. When taken, it serves its purpose well.

Some teachers fiercely object to the Translation Questions, and are quite right to do so for themselves and for their pupils. They should request special papers suited to their methods of teaching. We who write do not take their view.

A compulsory Oral Test, however, where it does not already exist, is in our opinion a development urgently necessary and too long delayed. The spoken tongue is of essential importance in the study and use of a Modern Language, and the stimulus of its test should be given to all who offer the subject. Since speech, comprehension, reading and writing are but aspects of one whole, the marks awarded in the Oral Test should form part of the global mark of the subject.

We must recognize that a compulsory External Oral Test would impose great strain on the examiners, or at least on those in a popular language. A single examining authority might need for a whole term the full-time services of a dozen Oral Examiners in French. It might not be possible to find such a number of suitable examiners. In that case, the test, standardized as far as possible, should be given by the pupils' own teachers, whose standard of marking might be suitably adjusted by calling a random selection of candidates to a suitable centre to be tested by the External Examiner. But, whatever method proves best, the Oral Examination must be made compulsory.

Once this development has been carried out, the whole range of the candidate's probable achievement will be satisfactorily tested. Some questions, however, such as Comprehension Questions, Reading, and Recitation, have relatively small scope and on that account should carry smaller maxima than others of wider range, such as *Thème* and *Version*.

Examination questions are certain to exercise some influence on classroom methods: some primary school teachers, for example, train their pupils for 'Intelligence Tests'! In any case, the examination itself forms part of the candidate's experience. It is, therefore, essential that every question should conform to good teaching practice. The existing questions, we are confident, satisfy this requirement, which should be firmly applied to all new types of question that may be suggested.

Ideally, we should ask only those questions which have the highest attainable validity. This, however, probably limiting the test to *Thème*, *Version*, and *Dictée*, would leave untouched vast fields of achievement. We are, therefore, bound to ask questions of admittedly lower validity, of which *Free Composition* is probably the most striking example. Our predecessors of 1929 pointed out the danger of injustice in this test; yet it has tremendous educational values, not least of which is its encouragement to *think* in the foreign tongue, and we cannot possibly contemplate its exclusion from the papers. In this case, and in others, we must make the questions as valid as we can without educational loss: residual unfairness can be reduced by awarding lower maxima to questions of lower validity.

We recommend that marks in French be awarded approximately in these proportions:—

<i>Question</i>				<i>Range</i>	<i>Validity</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
1.	<i>Thème</i>	...	...	Great	Great	65
2.	<i>Free Composition</i>	...	...	Great	Moderate	40
3.	<i>Version</i>	...	...	Great	Great	65
4.	<i>Comprehension Tests</i>	...	...	Moderate	Good	30
5.	<i>Dictée</i>	...	...	Good	Great	50
6.	<i>Reading, etc.</i>	...	...	Moderate	Good	20
7.	<i>Conversation</i>	...	...	Good	Moderate	30
Total				...	...	300

In Spanish and in German, Dictation should have less weight than in French; some, even in French, would give to it less importance than we have suggested.

In the School Certificate Examination, a 'successful' candidate has hitherto been placed in one of three categories: P, 'Pass'; C, 'Credit'; A, 'Very Good'. The Secondary Schools Examinations Council have recommended that, at the 'Ordinary' level in the Examination for the 'General Certificate of Education', the standard for a 'Pass' shall approximate to what has been the 'Credit' standard in the S.C. So far as Modern Languages are concerned, we cordially approve the recommendation. We have long had faith in the 'Credit' standard as proving substantial achievement; but we, and many university and professional bodies with us, have felt that the 'Pass' mark has often been awarded to candidates whose learning has little real value. We hope, indeed, that under the new system examiners will forget the word 'approximate' and, in our subjects, insist on the full 'Credit' standard. May we further be permitted to suggest that the name 'Ordinary' is likely to be of little inspiration to our pupils and that some such term as 'Credit' or 'Normal' would be preferable?

(ii) *The Questions*

Thème

This question, to most candidates the most difficult in the subject, mercilessly displays the worst of their shortcomings.

Examiners, pained by the rubbish which they have to read, are apt to put the blame on poor teaching. No doubt some teachers are inefficient, and no doubt some good teachers give too much time to other aspects of their work: yet it is probable that the main causes of poor performance in this question lie elsewhere.

One potent cause has been the offering of Modern Language subjects by candidates who could at most hope for a bare 'Pass'. Once the 'Credit' standard is the minimum for success, we may reasonably hope that the majority of weak candidates will wait a year or longer before offering a subject. This will eliminate some of the bad examination work.

Some, but not all. Experienced teachers know well that able pupils sometimes make absurd mistakes, even in class exercises: 'tu est', 'elle a arrivée', 'c'est douze heures'. Such errors often betray, not ignorance, but inherent imperfections of immature minds. Time and practice alone can cure them. Under the stress of examination, such defects are likely to be more prominent. The inexperienced teacher must not be unduly depressed if in a 'rehearsal' examination a usually satisfactory pupil writes: 'Il gloussa dans son poche l'aneau quelle avait lui donnée le jour avant'. Sound teaching can reduce the frequency of a pupil's bad blunders: rarely or never, within the limit of his school life, can they be wholly eliminated.

Some members of universities have suggested that 'sentences' should replace the connected 'prose'. This, they maintain, would tend to cure that weakness in fundamental grammar which often besets university students. The effect might, in fact, well be the reverse, for examiners and teachers might be encouraged to concentrate on a limited number of points. But it is in any case certain that the connected 'prose' demands linguistic skill, additional to that required by 'sentences' and of very high importance. To adopt the 'sentences' method, ignoring these values, would be a retrograde step.

The 'Prose' now set in the S.C. Examination is generally well suited to its purpose. Interest, hard to provide, is often found; the vocabulary required is almost always reasonable; usually a wide range of points of elementary

grammar is tested, yet without inducing a feeling of hopelessness in any suitable candidate.

Occasionally there are errors in testing. A 'key-noun', the base of many agreements, or a word several times repeated may cause acute depression in a candidate who happens to have forgotten it; his anxiety increases with every lacuna and with every doubtful agreement. Such words should either be avoided or supplied. Choice of words may impair validity: a candidate who, instead of using the word 'bague', writes 'L'anneau qu'elle a trouvé', may have got his past participle right by accident. Similarly, 'the little mouse' fails to test adjective agreement if the candidate thinks that 'souris' is masculine: it would be better to say 'mice'.

It is still more unfortunate if the passage over-emphasizes a particular point of grammar. In French, for example, more than a dozen Past Participle Agreements have at times been set in one Thème. Such excessive weighting of one section of knowledge is liable to distort the whole picture of a candidate's achievement. Thème can be a test of the very highest validity: every care should be taken to make it so.

Free Composition

This test offers a dilemma. If the candidates are allowed complete freedom of self-expression, it becomes impossible to compare with accuracy the varied results of their erratic aims, and they may insert matter learned by heart; while, if we fix in any degree what the candidate has to say, then to that extent the composition is not 'Free'.

The most hopeful compromise, it would seem, is to fix the subject-matter, even in detail, but to allow to the candidate the maximum freedom in his mode of treatment.

The composition should make minimum demands upon the literary ability and imagination of the candidates.

Few among them possess these qualities in any high degree: fewer still are able to display them in a foreign tongue. The essay, a difficult literary form, is quite unsuitable. To rely chiefly upon description strains the imagination. A simple narrative offers by far the most suitable type of subject.

The method adopted in fixing or limiting the subject-matter is of high importance. A framework could be given in English, but that would encourage the vice of translation; a framework in the foreign language, if sufficiently detailed for its purpose, does much to dictate the form of the candidate's sentences; a story, to be continued by the candidate, may ask too much of his imagination. In our view, a series of drawings offers a satisfactory solution of the problem.

The drawings, of course, must be clear, even if this should entail some loss of artistry; the incidents must be of everyday experience, free from complication and from absurdity; dramatic quality is desirable, but there must be no straining after humour, for comic talent is very rare and amateur humorists often stray into flagrant improbability. It is, in fact, not difficult to devise suitable subjects such as the following:—

1. Two boys mount on one bicycle and career dangerously down a steep hill; at the bottom they fall into a stream.
2. A mother is in the garden with her child. She gets up to receive goods from the grocer's boy. While she is busy, the child tears up the book which she has been reading.
3. A dog chases a kitten, which escapes through a hole in the garden fence. The dog tries to jump over the fence, but fails. He goes to sleep. Then the kitten comes back and lies down beside him.

Key-words, unless very common, should be supplied to the candidate by unmistakable use in the title, by labelled drawings or by direct translation.

An examining authority will have no difficulty in getting the drawings made; the extra expense will be very small in relation to the importance of the test.

We confidently recommend this type of test as well suited to its purpose.

Version

It is important that the passages set in this question be within the range of the candidate's imagination and of interest to him. They should be well written, but free from unusual tricks of style. It is generally necessary to use extracts, yet each of these should have a certain unity and completeness.

It might be suggested that the passages should be based on a particular word-count, say of 2,000 words. The examination, we feel, would lose rather than gain by such a policy. The interest of the questions would probably suffer. General reading in class would be discouraged, while teachers would be tempted to sink into stereotyped method. In any case, anyone who makes practical use of his linguistic knowledge is nearly sure to have to deal with unfamiliar words on the spur of the moment; his ability to infer their meaning from their context is part of his linguistic equipment.

It is, in fact, no disadvantage if a few phrases or sentences, not necessary for comprehension of the whole, are difficult enough fully to extend the most able candidates. On the other hand, we must not unduly depress the weak: therefore some sentences should be easy.

Sometimes an extract from a play is regularly set. Yet a good playwright relies on interpretation by his actors, and many adults lack the imagination necessary to read

plays, even in their own language. Moreover, the language of a good play is necessarily condensed: if an approach to everyday conversation is desired, it is more likely to be found in the dialogue of novelists. There is no objection to the occasional setting of a suitable extract from a play; to do so systematically is probably a mistake.

Verse translation, for the purpose of this examination, has deservedly lost ground. Certainly the pupil should have read some verse in the foreign language, but that is another matter. It is not easy for the examiner to find a passage little known, suitable in subject and free from eccentricities in treatment; and, when he has found such a set of verses, it is still doubtful whether the literary understanding of the average candidate makes the effort worth while.

On the whole, we recommend that all passages for this examination be in ordinary prose, and we feel that novels offer to the examiner his happiest hunting-ground.

Comprehension

The passage set in a comprehension question should certainly be in prose. It should be two or three times as long as the usual passage set for 'version.'

Answers are sometimes demanded in English, sometimes in the foreign language. The difference is so great as to constitute virtually two distinct types of test.

When answers in the foreign language are required, the test is partly one of composition. This tends to impair the validity of the marking. A, we will suppose, is very weak both in Comprehension and Composition and he will rightly get few marks or none; B, who can write respectable easy French, but has failed to understand the passage, and C, who tries to give the right answers in execrable language, will also get very bad marks: yet both B and C deserve better than A.

On the whole, we think it preferable that in this test answers in English be required.

In any case, care must be taken to avoid the overlapping of different answers, and to ensure that a candidate who understands the passage can know with certainty what to put into each answer and what to leave out.

Dictée

This question is of very high validity: we have only to choose a passage suitable in interest and difficulty and to standardize its delivery. The proper standard of difficulty, we suggest, lies about midway between that of a translated *Thème* and of a passage suitable for *Version*; 150 to 175 words would be a suitable length.

At this stage, long phrases should be avoided, and the candidates must not be hurried. If the *Dictée* has to be given by the pupils' own teachers, then the date and time should be fixed as for a written paper, and clear, detailed instructions should ensure standardization.

Other Oral Tests

It is well known that Oral Examinations impose a great strain upon nervous and sensitive pupils. To reduce this as far as may be, the examiner must do his best to put the candidates at their ease.

In the Reading Test, passages should be easy to understand, and the candidate should be given an opportunity of examining his passage before reading it. Even so, many good candidates, overawed by the occasion, will probably do themselves less than justice. In some examinations, the candidate has to read a passage prepared before the examination: this method reduces the scope of the test, but increases its validity.

It has been suggested that the candidate should be required to recite a passage of verse. This, it seems to us,

would be of little use in this examination. Most of the declamations would be like the speech of wooden parrots; and we have earlier referred to the sufferings of the Examiner in such a test. Reading and Conversation, in our view, sufficiently test the pupil's speech.

Conversation Tests are really very difficult to give. They are easier if there is some defined subject for conversation. The Examiner can begin with one or two questions of the type: 'Comment vous appelez-vous? Quel âge avez-vous?' and can then go on to ask about the passage just read or about a picture shown to the candidate (not a picture-card published for study in the language, which some candidates may already have used for practice) or perhaps about the view from the window of the room. In one way or another, the candidate should have under his eyes the subject that he is discussing.

In awarding a candidate's marks for Oral Work it is nearly impossible to follow any mathematical system. The Examiner will do best to rely chiefly on his impressions, but to temper these with some mercy to the unfortunate and in some degree to correlate his findings with the teacher's pre-estimate.

(2) SCHOOL TESTS IN THE FIFTH AND SIXTH FORMS

(i) '*Rehearsal*' Tests

For pupils who are to take an External Examination at 'Ordinary' or 'Advanced' level, it is customary to arrange a 'rehearsal' test. Such tests, though not essential, serve useful purposes: they show how effort can best be directed during the remaining weeks of preparation; often they reveal cases where a pupil is best advised to postpone offering a particular subject, or perhaps sitting for the Examination.

Pupils preparing for 'Scholarship' Papers, and for University Scholarship Examinations should be accus-

tomed in class and in private study to Questions of types likely to be asked; but a 'rehearsal' of such papers is of little use.

'Rehearsal' tests have usually been given at Easter preceding the Examination. If the date of the latter is set earlier, it will probably be necessary to change also the date of the 'rehearsal', at least when Easter falls late. Such a test in the course of the term will place regrettable strain on class teachers: it should not lead to a change in the date of other school tests.

In his own subject, the teacher will, of course, make the 'rehearsal' as like the External Examination as he can. Often, he can use old papers of the latter: if Question Papers are collected every year, duplicating new copies can often be avoided, but, of course, any specimens having notes in writing must be rejected. The full 'rehearsal' of the Oral Examination would take disproportionate time, but Dictée and Reading tests should be given at a suitable opportunity.

TERM TESTS FOR EXAMINATION CANDIDATES

A Christmas Term Test, in addition to the 'Rehearsal', is not necessary, but may be demanded of candidates for the July Examinations. If a test time-table is prepared, less time will probably be allowed than in the Examination; while, if tests are given in ordinary lesson periods, it will be unwise to give to them a week or more of teaching time. At this stage, short Thèmes, Free Compositions, etc., are liable to give very erratic results. It is therefore better to give selected Questions at full length than to shorten the length of all. Questions omitted should be those in which progress can be well observed in class: most teachers would say that Comprehension and Spoken Tests fall within this group.

In any test set much earlier than Easter, the moderate

and weak pupils must not be depressed by Questions of the full difficulty of the coming Examination. Pupils commonly make great progress in the last half-year.

(ii) Term Tests for Non-Examination Pupils

There may be a group or groups of Fifth-Form age which, owing to lesser achievement, have no pupils preparing for the Examination. To such pupils, papers should be set adjusted to their ability. Sometimes a paper of Fourth-Form standard will be suitable; more often a paper of that standard in grammar, but of a rather wider range in vocabulary and idiom.

Pupils in the First Year of the Advanced Course will not normally need a 'rehearsal' examination. Since usually they are keen on their work, school tests for these can often be treated as 'incidents' rather than as 'events'. In any case, it will generally be easy to find suitable Versions in books of unseens, and Thèmes in English books: thus duplicating can be saved.

Examination sets at either 'Ordinary' or 'Advanced' stage may contain some individuals who have been advised to postpone taking the Examination. Except in extreme cases these should take the same papers as their classmates: they are likely in any case to feel their position rather keenly, and there is no need to 'rub it in'. Provided that no fictitious 'Passes' are given, their answers should be treated with mercy. On the other hand, if the decision can be taken early in the school year, it is certainly better to transfer these pupils to a non-Examination group.

(iii) Progress Tests

Here it is necessary to remark only that, since pupils preparing for External Examinations are usually very interested in their work, it is often possible in their case to reduce the time given to progress tests.

For the rest, a teacher who has weighed the earlier sections of this chapter will have no difficulty in devising suitable progress tests at these stages: he will have accepted or rejected our point of view, and in either case his course will be clear to him.

(3) THE 'ADVANCED' EXAMINATION PAPERS

The S.S.E.C. recommends that the standard of the new 'Advanced' papers shall closely approximate to that of the 'Principal' Papers in the old H.S.C. This standard is indeed well suited to the needs of 'academic' students.

We regret, however, the disappearance of the old 'Subsidiary' Papers. These have served a good purpose, and could still be very useful: we hope that they will be restored. If so, we shall of course urge that they include a compulsory Oral Examination of suitable standard.

During the past generation, experience has led to improvements in the 'Principal Subject' Examination. These developments have been gradual, but cumulatively far-reaching, and undoubtedly of great benefit to education. There is every reason to suppose that this progress continues. General satisfaction, and high hope for the future, are alike justified.

It remains our present duty to examine whether our experience makes possible any immediate change in the 'Advanced' Examination in Modern Languages. In doing so, we are in large measure guided by the principles stated in Section 4 of our Chapter on 'Method' (Chap. V). In addition, bearing in mind that these are selected students, we can reasonably demand some approach to literary style, both in the foreign tongue and in English, and, to serve prognostic requirements, some demonstration of intelligence. On the other hand, since our candidates are not yet fully mature, we must not put excessive strain upon them.

This last consideration makes us wish to limit the num-

ber and length both of the Written Papers and of the Oral Tests. Two three-hour Written Papers should be ample : some authorities in fact use slightly less time. It is even more important that the Oral Examination should be short : such a test is exhausting for all candidates, but particularly so for certain specially sensitive types of student, rather more numerous among girls than boys. Most teachers, at any rate of girls, will admit that sometimes they have watched the progress of an Oral Examination in acute fear of the nervous breakdown of a particular pupil.

Dictation offers no special difficulty : self-consciousness is in the background, and moderate length of the Test is ample to secure validity. It is the truly *viva voce* Tests that cause the trouble. We strongly urge that these should be limited to Reading and Conversation (or Description, e.g. of pictures), with the possible addition of a short Recitation. The Conversation Test should not go beyond its proper limits : literary knowledge, for example, may well provide material for conversation, but should not here be tested as such.

Where two Written Papers are set, it is customary and convenient to devote the first chiefly to Language, the second chiefly to Literature and Social Study.

The first paper should then include *Thème*, Essay, Version, including Prose and Verse, and possibly an easy part-question on the Scansion of Verse. *Thème* should be relatively easy (it will still be quite difficult enough !), and the passage should be of well-written English. In the Essay, several choices of subject should be available, some of which should be of general interest rather than derived from the Syllabus; each subject should offer plenty of material, yet the Essay required should be short, say of 200-250 words, and it should be fairly easy to sketch the subject within this compass. Each passage, Prose and

Verse, set in Version should have a meaning complete in itself; a natural tendency of the Advanced Course to deal chiefly with a literary vocabulary should if possible be counteracted by the selection of passages having some homeliness of subject; the Verse passage should demand linguistic understanding rather than literary intuition.

So far we have followed well-trodden ways. The introduction, proposed in some quarters, of a test in the literary appreciation of poetry now claims our attention.

An experiment carried out one December by a practising teacher may here be of interest. Having a certain facility for rhyming, he composed these three quatrains, each linking 'l'amour' with some idea of sound. Of these, A and C were intended to combine some absurdity with much literary platitude, while B, it was hoped, was reasonably pleasing:—

A. Tout dort. Le jour s'est tu. Nul frôlement de vent.
Au silence profond et grand, j'entends les sphères
Imperceptiblement chanter les beaux mystères
De l'amour qui inspire les dieux du firmament.

B. Et dans ma chaumière,
À la fin du jour,
L'humble chaudière
Me chante l'amour.

C. L'esprit du doux Zéphyr se glisse par la treille,
Tout frais et parfumé des roses de la cour;
En me baisant au front, il souffle à mon oreille
Le chant voluptueux et triste de l'amour.

The next day he gave the verses to his Form 6A. There were eight pupils, each of whom passed at 'Principal' H.S.C. level in the following July: the highest mark gained was 67, the lowest 41, and the average 51. The group may therefore be taken as fairly representative of the 'non-Scholarship' type of candidate.

The pupils knew nothing of the authorship of the verses. They were told to ignore technical questions of prosody, but to arrange the quatrains in order of poetic merit; to give to each a mark, 10 representing the highest flight of poetic genius, 0 poetic worthlessness; and to write brief notes on anything especially good or bad in the passages. Here are the pupils' awards of order of merit:—

<i>Quatrain</i>	<i>1st place</i>	<i>2nd place</i>	<i>3rd place</i>
A	3	3	2 pupils
B	3	2	3 „
C	2	3	3 „

The random symmetry of this result will be noticed. Even more surprising are the marks given to the verses. Two pupils gave as many as 9 marks to C, though one detractor gave it but 3. To B, three enthusiasts gave 8, while one scoffer rated it at 1 mark. A was treated with more of kindness and consistency, the marks ranging from 8 to 5. Average marks were A, $6\frac{3}{4}$; B, $5\frac{3}{4}$; C, $5\frac{3}{4}$. Thus there was a slight preference for the tawdry finery of A. On the whole, however, the marks strongly suggest a haphazard diversity, qualified by an almost general tendency to over-estimate.

We lack space to transcribe in full the remarks of the pupils. Here are representative quotations:—

A. 'Vividness of atmosphere . . . The mediaeval idea of the spheres of the firmament revolving within each other, thus making music, enhances the beauty of the image.'

'Thought behind poem beautiful and rather original.'

'Artificial: first line too jerky for subject-matter.'

B. 'Extremely simple, both in thought and style. Contains no artificiality, and therefore makes a deeper impression than A and C.'

'Simple, homely and quite moving.'

'The monotonous rhythm and stressed rhyme sequence are unsuitable for really fine poetry . . . mere doggerel.'

- C. 'Extremely moving; charming picture; light wind, trellis and roses, all very simple and most effective.'

'Smooth rhythm and soft lingering syllables.'

'Almost insincere: subject-matter vague (what are "des roses de la cour", anyway?); whilst "mon oreille" seems almost ridiculous after previous high-flown language.'

Some of the replies seem to give evidence of literary interest well worth fostering, and there are fitful flashes of penetration. Unfortunately, such intelligence was by no pupil sustained throughout even this short test: everybody was sometimes deceived by sham and clap-trap.

This test tends to confirm what our general experience suggests: the average 'Principal Subject' or 'Advanced Level' candidate is incapable of estimating literary merit in a foreign language. His literary judgment will in any case be unformed and immature; when to this is added the difficulty of evaluating expressions in a foreign tongue, the pupil is as a sheep to the shearer.

The 'Scholarship' candidate is on a different footing. We shall discuss his case in our next section. For the candidate who cannot rise above the 'Advanced' level, questions on literary appreciation of unseen verse are completely valueless.

Like Free Composition at the 'Ordinary' level, questions on literature at the 'Advanced' level pose a dilemma: the pupil must study, and must try to appreciate, some works of literature, and therefore must be asked some questions about them; yet since his literary appreciation is likely to be potential rather than existent, our questions will

strongly tempt him to repeat 'what teacher said' or what the book said.

In this Examination, it is probable that questions on Social Knowledge, strongly favouring those who offer also such subjects as History and Geography, have validity no higher than those on Literature. Yet these, too, must be included.

We have said that much choice should be allowed in dividing effort between Literature and Social Subjects; this must be recognized in the Examination Paper. Recent Northern H.S.C. Papers in French may serve as an example of satisfactory compromise. About twelve Prescribed Books are divided into three approximately equal Sections, thus : I. Literature before 1800; II. Literature after 1800; III. Social Subjects. A candidate may not answer two Questions on any one book; he must answer four Questions in all, one from Section I, one from Section II, and the others may be chosen anywhere in the Paper. Some teachers might desire at least one compulsory Question on Social Subjects : in view of the relatively poor quality of works available in this Section, we make no such demand for the present.

In devising Questions on works of Literature, every care must be taken not to ask too much. Questions on detail, e.g. 'context' Questions, tend to obstruct *general* reading and should be avoided; it is hopeless to expect any great knowledge of literary history, while literary appreciation, as we have seen, will usually be undeveloped. The Questions should therefore be general in type, designed, not to insist on knowledge and understanding of particular kinds, but rather to allow the candidate to show what he does know and understand. 'Discuss the character of Alceste'; 'What admirable qualities do you find in the character of Cyrano?' 'What impression of Alfred de Vigny do you derive from those of his poems which you have read?'

Such Questions as these, while giving reasonable opportunity to every candidate, none the less afford scope for the display of the highest abilities, if they be present.

Opinions on matters of taste should be treated by Examiners with some mercy. They should value expressions of personal opinion as showing healthy independence, and should consider, not so much the soundness of the views, but rather the skill and knowledge with which they are supported. It is our impression that Examiners usually display much understanding in such matters.

Questions on Social Subjects should demand broad understanding rather than specialized knowledge. Such a Question as this is quite unsuitable: 'What prehistoric races contributed to the growth of the French people?' It would be much better to ask: 'Give some description of life in France under Louis XIV' (or 'under Napoleon I', or 'between the Two World Wars', as the subject-matter of the Prescribed Book may suggest). Geographical Questions should be concerned with natural regions—the Paris Basin, the valley of the Rhine or of the Ebro—rather than with provinces having man-made boundaries. In this branch as in Literature, we want the student's reading and interest to be as wide as may be; and the more detailed the type of Question to be asked, the greater his temptation to concentrate on the Book or Books prescribed.

The principal object of the Questions on Literature and on Social Knowledge is to encourage the interest of students—and, perhaps, of teachers—in these important fields. As measures of achievement and promise, they are at this stage inescapably imperfect: the limitations of students are alone sufficient to impair their validity. For these reasons we feel that they should not be heavily weighted in the scheme of marking. We suggest that marks should be awarded approximately in these proportions:—

Thème	...	...	...	...	...	30 marks
Essay	...	...	...	...	...	30
Prose Version	...	...	...	...	...	20
Poetry Version	...	...	...	...	...	20
Dictée	...	...	...	...	...	20
Reading	...	...	...	...	...	10
Conversation	...	...	...	...	...	20
Literature and Social Study	...	...	...	...	...	50
Total	...	...	...	...	...	<u>200</u> „

(4) THE 'SCHOLARSHIP' PAPERS

These Papers, and those set by Universities to determine their major awards, are designed to select the ablest of our pupils, to distinguish actual and potential brilliance from mere competence.

There can be no doubt that they admirably serve this purpose. Universities have much experience of this type of Examination. The value of their experience is shown by their own confidence in the validity of their results.

Rightly, in view of the purpose of the Papers, they make very high demands upon the intelligence, and the marking is severe. It is quite useless for a moderate candidate to take them: in a Modern Language, one who can obtain 50 per cent. at the 'Advanced' level is unlikely to reach 25 per cent. in the 'Scholarship' Papers. This is as it should be. Sometimes an excessively zealous head teacher causes unsuitable candidates to take 'Scholarship' Papers. More frequently, Local Authorities are so unwise as to require, as a condition of their own greatly inferior awards, that students sit for the 'Scholarship.' Such requirements should be withdrawn.

Since the emphasis in these Papers is upon prognostic value and on the discovery of very high intelligence, Questions of scope too wide or too deep for the 'Advanced' Papers are not only permissible, but necessary. Questions on the literary appreciation of prose and verse, for example, can now find an honoured place; and some grasp of the

story of literary development can reasonably be expected.

And yet, remembering that many able candidates sit for their 'Advanced' and 'Scholarship' Papers in the same year, we must avoid any lengthening of the list of Prescribed Books. It is true that the brilliant can read more than the competent pupil; yet the stress should still be laid on the general rather than the prescribed reading. Let interest and imagination range far: they will come home again in due time. It is in this connection interesting to notice that Questions on Literature in 'Scholarship' Papers are often general in character, apparently no more difficult than those on the 'Advanced' Paper: the difference lies in what is expected of the candidate!

Linguistic Questions, on the other hand, are obviously more difficult than at the lower level. Great demands are made in vocabulary, greater still in idiom. High ability of certain kinds is best detected by making it face virtually insuperable obstacles.

We should emphasize, however, that linguistic difficulty in *Thème* and *Version* should arise purely from the needs of the subject-matter, not from the eccentricity of the author of the passage, still less from his lack of literary skill. Occasionally 'proses' have been set which certainly could not serve as models of English Composition. There is fortunately available, in English and in every Modern Language offered, an abundance of finely expressed writing; and the difficulty of well translating such work is usually quite sufficient to test the skill of the very best of our pupils.

Apart from occasional criticisms of this kind, the compiling of the 'Scholarship' Papers in Modern Languages can well be left to the Universities. They know what they want and, if it be available, they know how to find it. There is, in fact, no lack of suitable candidates. The number of State Scholarships has recently been raised to 750. Uni-

versities declare, and our own experience confirms, that this number is still far from sufficient to provide for every student of high promise. The position, however, will be substantially improved if the recommendations made by the Working Party on University Awards at the end of 1948 are fully implemented.

Let us not forget that these results are obtained under teachers sometimes overburdened by heavy and conflicting school duties; and by students often restricted in choice of course and subject by shortages of staff and difficulties of organization. Let us remember also that economic troubles frequently keep pupils of high promise from completing their full school course. Were the supply of teachers of high attainment less uncertain; had they always time for their preparation, notably of Sixth Form work; had they the libraries, the textbooks, the materials and the small intimate classrooms which they need for such classes; were the school careers of pupils less often affected by hard economic realities; who knows how much of brilliance, at present thwarted of full development, might be placed at the service of the community?

It is probable that during the life of this book our educational services will continue to fall far short of ideal standards. National poverty, political vagaries, and administrative rigidity may continue to rob our education of some part of its rightful due, and some of our best brains may still achieve less than they might. Such losses are greater than the community can afford. Even so, it would be hard to exaggerate the value of the work now done by our most successful students. Provided only that human problems can be solved by human intelligence, these are the brains that can lead us from our present Age of Confusion into a new Age of Progress. We who write are proud to take a humble part in the encouragement of their talents.

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The prices given are according to the latest information available at the time of preparing this bibliography, and are not to be regarded as the prices ruling when the books become available again. They are included mainly as a general guide, to give some indication of the size of the books.

The bibliography does not attempt to be exhaustive. An effort has been made to give a fairly representative selection, but it has been necessary to limit the number of books under each head, and it must not be assumed that, if a book is not included, it is not recommended.

Pamphlets and Reports, Articles, and books on Method often deal with more than one language. These are accordingly listed without distinction of languages, as are works on general Linguistics and Periodicals. There follow lists of books on French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish, grouped under sub-headings of Linguistics, Phonetics, Dictionaries with Word and Idiom Books, History of Literature, and Background and General.

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